

THE WORKS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY Vol. II ASCII VERSION

March 4, 1993 e.v. key entry by Bill Heidrick, T.G. of O.T.O.
January 11, 1994 e.v. proofed and conformed to the "Essay Competition Copy"
edition of 1906 e.v. by Bill Heidrick T.G. of O.T.O. Descriptions of portraits retained, even though they are not in this edition.
(The winner of the competition was J.F.C.Fuller's "The Star in the West")

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Pages in the original are marked thus at the bottom: {page number} or {page number A} and {page number B}.
Comments and descriptions are also set off by curly brackets {}
Comments and notes not in the original are identified with the initials of the source: e.g. WEH note = Bill Heidrick note, etc. Descriptions of illustrations are not so identified, but are simply in curly brackets.

Text Footnotes have been expanded at or near the point of citation within double angle brackets, e.g. <>. For poems, most longer footnotes are cited in the text to expanded form below the stanzas.

THE WORKS OF
ALEISTER CROWLEY

VOLUME II

ESSAY COMPETITION COPY

THE WORKS
OF

ALEISTER CROWLEY

"{variation: WITH PORTRAITS}"

VOLUME II

FOYERS
SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH

1906

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{ILLUSTRATION ON PAGE FACING AND JUST BEFORE TITLE: in the delux edition:

This is a dark photo of Crowley in his 20s, left side silhouette with part of neck in light. The head is inclined downward slightly and an open MS is in hand. Background upper right shows a simple frame on the wall with white matte and two oblong documents, part of a third just visible at the right edge. Below this photo is "Aleister Crowley", signature.}

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{Full page announcement in the competition edition. Not in all editions.}

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

WE beg to express regret for the delay in issuing Vol. II. As originally made up, it was too big, and had to be recast completely. Mr. Crowley's Works to date will thus be complete in three volumes of this edition.

Advance copies or sets of proofs of Vol. III. will be sent to "bona-fide" competitors on their written application. The volume should be issued in December.

Owing to the severe and continuous illness of the artist to whom the Table of Correspondences was entrusted, we are compelled to delay its issue.

The Essay Competition will definitely close three months from date.

"Oct." 15, 1906.

"Crowley's Works, Vol. II."

ORACLES

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN ART<<1>>

1905 {columns commence}

<<1. This volume consists of unpublished poems dating from 1886-1903. Concerning the title Crowley writes, "The sense is of dead leaves drifting in the dusty cave of my mind." He does not seem to have been aware that Coleridge gave the title "Sibylline Leaves" to a similar collection.>>

THE DEATH OF THE DRUNKARD.<<1>>

I.

TERROR, and darkness, and horrid despair!
Agony painted upon the once fair
Brow of the man who refused to give up
The love of the wine-filled, the o'erflowing cup.
"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging."

No wine in death is his torment assuaging.

II.

.
.

Just what the parson had told me when young:
Just what the people in chapel have sung:

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging."

.
"Desunt cetera."

<<1. This, the earliest poem ever written by me, has perished save the above fragment. Its date is 1886. -- A.C.

It should be noted that this fragment is of a wildly revolutionary tendency. It made him the Ibsen of a school where a parson and a chapel were considered with the rest of the non- Plymouth-Brethren world as so many devils let loose from hell.>>

A PEEP BEHIND THE SCENES.

In the hospital bed she lay,
Rotting away!
Cursing by night and cursing by day,
Rotting away! {1A}
The lupus is over her face and head,
Filthy and foul and horrid and dread,
And her shrieks they would almost wake the dead;
Rotting away!

In her horrible grave she lay,
Rotting away!
Rotting by night, and rotting by day,
Rotting away!
In the place of her face is a gory hole,
And the worms are gnawing the tissues foul,
And the devil is gloating over her soul,
Rotting away!

LINES ON BEING INVITED TO MEET THE PREMIER IN WALES, SEPTEMBER
1892.

I WILL not shake thy hand, old man,
I will not shake thy hand;
You bear a traitor's brand, old man,
You bear a liar's brand.
Thy talents are profound and wide,
Apparent power to win;
It is not everyone has lied
A nation into sin.

And look thou not so black, my friend,
Nor seam that hoary brow;
Thy deeds are seamier, my friend,
Thy record blacker now. {1B}
Your age and sex forbid, old man,
I need not tell you how,
Or else I'd knock you down, old man,
Like that extremist cow.<<1>>

<<1. Mr. Gladstone was attacked by a cow in Hawarden Park in 1891.>>

You've gained your every seat, my friend,
By perjuring your soul;
You've climbed to Downing Street, my friend,
A very greasy poll.
You bear a traitor's brand, old man,
You bear a liar's brand;
I will "not" shake thy hand, old man,
I will "not" shake thy hand.
["And I didn't."

THE BALLOON.

"Written (at the age of fifteen, and still unsurpassed) while in bed with measles at Tonbridge in Kent."

FLOATING in the summer air,
What is that for men to see?
Anywhere and everywhere,
Now a bullet, now a tree --
Till we all begin to swear:
What the devil can it be?

See its disproportioned head,
Tiny trunk and limbs lopped bare,
Hydrocephalus the dread
With a surgeon chopping there;
Chopping legs and arms all red
With the sticky lumps of hair.

Like a man in this complaint
Floats this creature in the sky,

Till the gaping rustics faint
And the smirking milkmaids cry,
As the chord and silk and paint,
Wood and iron drifteth by.

Floating in the summer sky
Like a model of the moon: --
How supreme to be so high
In a treacherous balloon,
Like the Kings of Destiny,
All the earth for their spittoon. {2A}

Toads are gnawing at my feet.
Take them off me quick, I pray!
Worms my juicy liver eat.
Take the awful beasts away!
Vipers make my bowels their meat.
Fetch a cunning knife and slay!

Kill the tadpoles in my lung,
And the woodlice in my spine,
And the beast that gnaws my tongue,
And the weasel at my chine,
And the horde of adders young
That around mine entrails twine!

Come, dissect me! Rip the skin!
Tear the bleeding flesh apart!
See ye all my hellish grin
While the straining vitals smart.
Never mind! Go in and win,
Till you reach my gory heart!

While my heart's soft pulse did go,

Devils had it in their bands.
Doctors keep it in a row,
Now, on varnished wooden stands:
And I really do not know
If it is in different hands.

SPOLIA OPIMA.

MY home is set between two ivory towers,

Fresh with the fragrance of a thousand flowers.
And the twin portals of a ruby door,
Portcullissed with the pearls of India's shore,
Loosed with a smile and opened with a kiss,
Bid me a joyous welcome there, I wis.
My home is on the brink of heaven's delight,
But for that endless day a lovelier night
Is in my home, that sunset's arms enfold,
Lit with the mellowness of autumn gold.

.
Pillowed on linen of the purest white,
Half-hidden by her locks' luxurious night,
Maddened by those soft eyes of melting glow,
Enamoured of that breast of breathing snow,
Caught in the meshes of her fine-spun hair,
Rocked by the beating of her bosom fair, {2B}
Held by her lips too tempting and too warm,
Bewitched by every beauty of her form,
The blush upon her cheek is deeper red,
Half glad, and half repenting what she said.
A moment's struggle, as her form I press: --
One soft sad sigh. Love conquers. I possess.

A WELCOME TO JABEZ.<<1>>

<<1. Jabez Balfour, author of the "Liberator" frauds.>>

"Reprinted from the 'Eastbourne Chronicle.'"

GREAT Liberator, come again,
Thy country needs thee sadly;
In Scotland Yard they all complain

They "want" thee, oh! so badly.

Thou canst not tell the signs and sobs
That for thy presence yearn;
And the great heart of England throbs
With joy at thy return.

For many a year prolong thy stay
By Portland's shady harbour;
And all expenses we will pay --
Especially the barber.

A change of work is rest, they say,
So honest toil shall rest thee;
No fears that thou must go away
Need haunt thee and molest thee.

We pray a level-headed set
Of fellow men, who know thee,
In some small measure grateful yet,
May pay thee what is owed thee.

The joys of single blessedness,
And undisturbed seclusion,
We envy for thee, we confess,
Until thy final fusion.

ELVINA.

"Written at Eastbourne."

"Tune" -- "German Evening Hymn."

WAS thy fault to be too tender?
Was thine error to be weak?
Was my kiss the chief offender
Pressed upon thy blushing cheek? {3A}

Was it sin to press and press thee
Till thy burning lips at last
Madly kissed me? How I bless thee,
Now, for that superb repast!

All-consuming, all-devouring,
All-absorbing, burnt the flame;
Burnt unchecked till, hotly showering,
Passion disregarded Shame!

Was it sin -- that moonlight madness?
Was our passion so accurst?
Sweetness damned to mother Sadness?
Satisfaction to bring Thirst?

Was our love to bring division?

Nay! ten thousand devils! nay!
And a devil in a vision
Hisses as I slumber, "Yea!

"Heaven of your accurst creation
Shall become a hell of fire;
Death for kisses, and damnation
For your love shall God require."

ADAPTATION OF "ONWARD, CHRISTIAN
SOLDIERS" TO THE NEEDS OF BRETHREN.<<1>>

<<1. This astonishing piece of satire was composed after some weeks in the house of a Plymouth Brother. Almost every phrase used therein is a quotation, not a parody.>>

PREFACE.

IN response to many suggestions from dear Brethren, I have adapted a hymn to the wants of the Church. In view of the grossly unscriptural nature of the original hymn (so-called) many changes have been rendered necessary, but I hope and trust that this has been effected without losing the grandeur of the original.<> To this effort of mine certain "false brethren unawares brought in" have objected, saying, "Touch not the accursed thing." I pass over the blasphemy of their thus adapting verses of Scripture to their own vile ends.

Let me, however, tell these "wolves in {3B} sheep's clothing," these "clouds without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of

darkness for ever (Jude 12,13), that they are "dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters" (Rev. xxii. 15), and again, that they are "fearful and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and idolaters, and all liars" (Rev. xxi. 8), and that they "shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev. xxi. 8), "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark. ix. 44).

Let me only add that they are "a herd of many swine feeding" (Matt. viii. 30).

"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. xxiii. 33).

And now, beloved brethren, with every prayer that this adaptation may prove of lasting blessing to You all, bringing forth "the fruits of the Spirit" (Gal. v. 22), especially "faith, hope and charity." "But the greatest of these is charity" (1 Cor. xiii. 13).

"ONWARD, PLYMOUTH BRETHREN."

"Chorus."

ONWARD, Plymouth Brethren, marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus trampled on the floor;
Kelly, Lowe or Jewell <<1>> lead against the foe,
Forward into battle, see their followers go.
Onward, Plymouth Brethren, marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus trampled on the floor.

<<1. These and other mentioned are or were great names among the contending "Brethren.">>

At the name of Barton, Raven's host doth flee,
On, M'Arthy's following, on to victory, {4A}
Stoney's scoundrels shiver at Our howls of rage,
Brothers, lift Your voices, Shriek aloud, Rampage!

Like a mighty army moves the Church of God.
Brothers, We are treading where the saints have trod.
We are all divided, fifty bodies We,
Fifty hopes and doctrines, nary charity.

Church and chapel perish! Open Plyms to hell!
But Our kind of Brethren still in safety dwell.
Raven's lot can never 'gainst the Lord prevail,

We are his brave followers, you are Satan's tail.

Come then, outside peoples, join Our noble throng!
Blend with Ours your voices in the triumph song!
Glory, praise and honour unto Us alone!
Christians' necks our footstool, Heaven itself Our throne!

"P.S." -- BELOVED BRETHERN, -- The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. For I, like Balaam (in the old legend), was compelled to express our real feelings and not our pretended ones. This, of course, absolutely ruins the adaptation. In fact, I am not certain as to whether it does not rather give us away!
Alas! we are only poor, weak, failing creatures!

Your broken-hearted, broken-winded, broken-kneed brother,
JUDAS CAIAPHAS TRUELOVE.

[The man Truelove was at once put out of fellowship. He will be certainly damned.

-- PILATE CROSSPATCH.] {4B}

TO MRS O..... N C...T.

"Written during the first session of the Licensing Committee of the London County Council."

I WILL not bring abuse to point my pen,
Nor a sarcastic tongue.
Think only what you might be, before men,
If you were young.

What fierce temptations might not lovers bring
In London's wicked city?
Perhaps you might yourself have one wee fling,
If you were pretty.

What might not hard starvation drive you to,
With Death so near and sure?
Perhaps it might drive even virtuous you,
If you were poor.

But is it just, or grateful to the One
That keeps even you from wrong,

Or even humble to shriek, "Get you gone,
For I am strong"?

Temptation has not touched you, Mrs. C...t!
Forsooth, I do not lie there,
For you are only not the thing you aren't
Through being neither.

And since some fall in Life's tremendous storm,
And you are on your feet,
Were it not better with a bosom warm
And accents sweet

To help to raise (and no man will upbraid you)

Your sisters fallen far?
'Tis vain! God's worst omission -- Heart -- has made you
The thing you are! {5A}

THE LITTLE HALF-SOVEREIGN.<<1>>

<<1. The occasion of this poem was the meeting of the author with a fair and virtuous damsel of pleasant address and conversation. She politely asked him to call at her residence on the following Sunday: but, on his doing so, she straightway demanded half-a-sovereign, and proffered a shameful equivalent. The indignant boy went off and gave vent to his feelings in the above rhymes.>>

RED is the angry sunset,
Murk is the even grey,
Heavy the clouds that hover
Over our Hell to-day.

"Say, in our dark Gomorrah,
Lord, can an angel find
Fifty, but fifty, righteous --
body -- I say not Mind."

Sadly the angel turneth --
"Stay, ere thou fleest, stay;
Canst thou not find me twenty?"
"Nay" is the answer, "nay."

"Are there not ten, bright spirit,
Hidden, nor quickly seen,
Somewhere in Hell's dark alleys,
Somewhere in Walham Green?

"Speak, for I see thy forehead
Sadden in dark denial,
Is there not one that standeth
Tempter and longsomeness of trial?

"Is not a candle burning
Somewhere amid the flame
Scorching the smoke of London
With its eternal shame?

"Is there no gate so stubborn
That shall not find a key,
That with our Sovereign's image
Graven in majesty?" {5B}

Why not the Devil's portrait
Graven in Walham Green?
Why with the bare suggestion
Dare we insult our Queen?

Give me the golden trumpet
Blown at the judgment-day,
Closing the gate of mercy
Over the Cast Away.

Melt me its gold to money,
Coin me that small, small ring
Stamped with the Hoof of Satan,
Bearing the name of King.

Then, in the murky midnight,
Silently lead me down,
Down into Hell's dark portals,
Far in the West of Town.

Then to the shrieks of devils
Writhing in torments keen,
Sing me the song that tells me

Ever of Walham Green.

Sing of the little half-sovereign
Dancing in golden sheen;
Leave me in Hell -- or, better,
Leave me in Walham Green.

ODE TO SAPPHO.

O LESBIAN maiden!
O plumed and snowlike in glory of whiteness!
O mystical brightness
With love-lyrics laden!
Joy's fulness is fainting for passion and sorrow.
To-night melts divine to the dawn of to-morrow,

O Lesbian maiden! {6A}

The flame-tongue of passion
Is lambent and strong;
In mystical fashion
Sucks sweetness from shade,
As the voice of thy song
In the halls of the dead,
Breaking fitful and wild,
Weird waking the slumber of Venus, the sleep of her child,
O Lesbian maiden!

Thy tongue reaches red
On that pillar of might!
Flaming gold from thy head
Is a garland of light
On the forehead of night,
As we lie and behold
All the wonders untold
That the joys of desire
In their secrets enfold,
As the pillars of fire
On the ocean of old!
O Lesbian maiden!

The delight of thy lips
Is the voice of the Spring
That the nightingales sing
Over Winter's eclipse,
While my fingers enring
The white limbs of thy sleep
And my lips suck the lips
Of the house of my dream,
And press daintily deep,
Till the joys are supreme
That thine amorous mouth
On the home of thy love
Would exhaust the fierce drouth
Of the rivers thereof,
Till thy white body quiver
With mystic emotion
As the star-blossoms shiver

On silvery river
Rushed into the ocean!
O Lesbian maiden! {6B}

IN A LESBIAN MEADOW.

I.

UNDER the summer leaves
In the half-light
Love his old story weaves
Far out of sight.
Here we are lone, at last.
Heaven is overcast
Yet with no night.
Ere her immortal wings
Gather the thread of things
Into her might,
Up will the moon arise
Through the black-azure skies:
Birds shall sing litanies
Still of delight.

II.

Let my lips wander where
Tender moss grows,
Where through their dusky air
Beams a red rose.
Where the bee honey sips
Let my desirous lips,
Kissing, uncloset
Delicate lips and chaste,
Sweetness divine to taste
While the sun glows;
There in the dusk to dwell
By the sweet water-well
In the wood's deepest dell
Where -- my love knows.

III.

Skies are grown redder far;
Tempest draws nigher;
Dark lowers a single star;
Mars, like the fire!
Fiercer our lips engage;
Limbs, eyes, ears gather rage;
Sharp grows desire. {7A}
Hear thy short bitter cries?
Pity thine agonies?
Loose, though love tire?
Nay, neither hear nor spare;
Frenzy shall mock at prayer;
Torture's red torch shall flare
Till thou expire.

IV.

Stars stud a cloudless sky;
Moon silvers blue;
Breeze is content to die;
Lightly falls dew.
Calm after strain and stress
Now to our weariness

Brings love anew.
Peace brings her balm to us,
Lying as amorous
Still, and as true,
Linked by new mystery,
Lovers confessed. A sigh
Sobs to the happy sky,
"Sorrow, go to!"

"TIS PITY ---"
-- FORD.<<1>>

<<1. John Ford, author of "'Tis Pity she's a Whore," a drama of fraternal incest, and other well-known plays.>>

BLOW on the flame!
The charcoal's vaporous fume
Shall hide our shame!

Come, love, within the gloom!
For one last night, sweet sister, be the same;
Come, nestle with me in sweet Death's hot womb!

Two sunny eyes!
And this is all my ruin!
Two gleaming thighs!
And all to my undoing!
Far-swelling curves in ivory rapture rise
Warm and too white -- bethink you of the wooing! {7B}

A kiss of fire;
A touch of passionate yearning
Steals higher and higher --
And kisses are returning!
The strong white grasp draws me still nigher and nigher,
Our fusing forms in one fierce furnace burning!

Fails to us speech
In Love's exultant leaping!
Each merged in each
The golden fruit is reaping!

.
Wilt slumber, dear? One last kiss, I beseech!

.....
Come to us, Death! My love and I are sleeping!

EPILOGUE TO "GREEN ALPS."<<1>>

<<1. A volume which was never issued. MSS. and proofs have been carefully destroyed. Several of the poems in this volume are taken from that, viz. pp. 6-19.>>

FAREWELL, my book, whose words I have not given
One tithe of those fierce fires that in me dwell!
Now, after these long nights that I have striven,
Farewell!

My spirit burns to know, but may not tell,
Whether thy leaves, by autumn breezes driven,
Fly far away beyond the immutable;

Whether thy soul shall find its home in heaven,

Or dart far-flaming through the vaults of hell --
To him that loveth much is much forgiven.
Farewell! {8A}

TWO SONNETS IN PRAISE OF
A PUBLISHER,

WHO SOUGHT TO INFECT OUR YOUTH
WITH HIS NOXIOUS WARES.

The ordure of this goat, who is called "Master Lenonard." -- ELIPHAZ
LEVI.

He's the man for muck. -- BROWNING.

I.

SMALL coffin-worms that burrow in thy brain
Writhe with delight; thy rotten body teems
With all infesting vermin, as beseems
The mirror of an obscene mind. In vain
Thy misbegotten brutehood shirks the pain

Of its avenging leprosy: death steams
In all thy rank foul atmosphere: the gleams
Of phosphorescent putrefaction wane.

Thy sordid hands reach through the filth to snatch
The offal money of a prurient swarm.
Thy liar's tongue licks liquid dung to hatch
From fetid ulcers with its slimy warm
Venom some fouler vermin, in their nest
Thy rotten heart and thy polluting breast!

II.

Egg of the Slime! Thy loose abortive lips
Mouth hateful things: thy shifty bloodshot eyes
Lurk craftily to snare some carrion prize,
The dainty morsel whence the poison drips
Unmarked: the masked infamy that slips
Into an innocent maw: corrupter wise!
Sly worm of hell! that close and cunning lies

With sucking tentacles for finger-tips.

Earth spits on thee, contagious Caliban!
Hell spits on thee; her sin is spiritual.
Only the awful slime and excrement
That sin sheds off will own thee for a man.
Only the worms in dead men's bowels that crawl
To lick a loathlier brother are content. {8B}

MY WIFE DIES.

THE sun of love shone through my love's deep eyes
And made a rainbow of her tender tears,
And on her cheeks I saw a blush arise
When her lips opened to say, loverwise,
"I love" -- and light broke through the cloud of fears
That hid her eyes.

The storm of passion woke in her red lips,
When first they clung to mine and rested there;
Lightnings of love were eager to eclipse

That earlier sunshine, and her whole soul clips
My soul -- I kissed out life, within her hair
Upon her lips.

We parted lips from lips and soul from soul
To new strange passions in unholy lands,
Where love's breath chars and scorches like a coal.
So she is dead to-day -- the sweet bells toll
A lost, lost soul, a soul in Satan's bands,
A lost, lost soul!

ODE TO VENUS CALLIPYGE.<<1>>

<<1. A statue in Naples. Callipyge means "having beautiful buttocks.">>

WHERE was light when the body came
Out of the womb of a perished prayer?
Where was life when the sultry air,
Hot with the lust of night and shame,
Brooded on dust, when thy shoulders bare
Shone on the sea with a sudden flame

Into all Time to abundant fame?

"Daughter of Lust by the foam of the sea!"
"Mother of flame! Sister of shame!"
"Tiger that Sin nor her son cannot tame!"
"Worship to thee! Glory to thee!"
"Venus Callipyge, mother of me." {9A}

Fruitless foam of a sterile sea,
Wanton waves of a vain desire,
Maddening billows flecked with fire,
Storms that lash on the brine, and flee,
Dead delights, insatiate ire
Broke like a flower to the birth of thee,
Venus Callipyge, mother of me!

Deep wet eyes that are violet-blue!
Haggard cheeks that may blush no more!
Body bruised daintily, touch of gore
Where the sharp fierce teeth have bitten through
The olive skin that thy sons adore,

That they die for daily, are slain anew
By manifold hate; for their tale is few.

Few are thy sons, but as fierce as dawn.
Sweet are the seconds, weary the days.
Nights? Ah! thine image a thousand ways
Is smitten and kissed on the fiery lawn
Where the wash of the waves of thy native bays
Laps weary limbs, that of thee have drawn
Laughter and fire for their souls in pawn.

O thy strong sons! they are dark as night,
Cruel and barren and false as the sea.
They have cherished Hell for the love of thee,
Filled with thy lust and abundant might,
Filled with the phantom desire to free
Body and soul from the sound and sight
Of a world and a God that doth not right.

O thy dark daughters! their breasts are slack,
Their lips so large and as poppies red;
They lie in a furious barren bed;
They lie on their faces; their eyelids lack

Tears, and their cheeks are as roses dead;
White are their throats, but upon the back
Red blood is clotted in gouts of black. {9B}

All on their sides are the wounds of lust
Wet, from the home of their auburn hair
Down to the feet that we find so fair;
Where the red sword has a secret thrust,
Pain, and delight, and desire they share.
Verily pain! and thy daughters trust
Thou canst bid roses spring out of dust.

Mingle, ye children of such a queen,
Mingle, and meet, and sow never a seed!
Mingle, and tingle, and kiss, and bleed
With the blood of the life of the Lampsacene, <<1>>
With the teeth that know never a pitiful deed
But fret and foam over with kisses obscene --
Mingle and weep for what years have been.

<<1. Priapus.>>

Never a son nor a daughter grow
From your waste limbs, lest the goddess weep;
Fill up the ranks from the babes that sleep
Far in the arms of a god of snow.
Conquer the world, that her throne may keep
More of its pride, and its secret woe
Flow through all earth as the rivers flow.

Which of the gods is like thee, our queen?
Venus Callipyge, nameless, nude,
Thou with the knowledge of all indued,
Secrets of life and the dreams that mean
Loves that are not, as are mortals', hued
All rose and lily, but linger unseen,
Passion-flowers purpled, garlands of green!

Who like thyself shall command our ways?
Who has such pleasures and pains for hire?
Who can awake such a mortal fire
In the veins of a man, that deathly days
Have robbed of the masteries of desire?
Who can give garlands of fadeless bays

Unto the sorrow and pain we praise? {10A}

Yea, we must praise, though the deadly shade
Fall on the morrow, though fires of hell
Harrow our vitals; a miracle
Springs at thy kisses, for thou hast made
Anguish and sorrow desirable;
Torment of hell as the leaves that fade
Quickly forgotten, despised, decayed.

They are decayed, but thou springest again,
Mother of mystery, barren, who bearest
Flowers of most comeliest children, who wearest
Wounds for delight, whose desire shall stain
Star-space with blood as the price thou sharest
Sweet with thy lovers, whose passing pain
Ripens to marvellous after-gain.

Thou art the fair, the wise, the divine!

Thou art our mother, our goddess, our life!
Thou art our passion, our sorrow, our strife!
Thou, on whose forehead no lights ever shine,
Thou, our redeemer, our mistress, our wife,
Thou, barren sister of deathlier brine,
Venus Callipyge, mother of mine!

"Daughter of lust by the foam of the sea!"
"Mother of flame! Sister of shame!"
"Tiger that Sin nor her son cannot tame!"
"Worship to thee! Glory to thee!"
"Venus Callipyge, mother of me."

THE CANNIBALS.

ALL night no change, no whisper. Scarce a breath,
But lips closed hard upon the cup of death
To drain its sweetest poison. Scarce a sigh
Beats the dead hours out; scarce a melody {10B}
Of measured pulses quickened with the blood
Of that desire which pours its deadly flood
Through soul and shaken body; scarce a thought,
But sense through spirit most divinely wrought
To perfect feeling; only through the lips

Electric ardour kindles, flashes, slips
Through all the circle to her lips again,
And thence, unwavering, flies to mine, to drain
All pleasure in one draught. No whispered sigh;
No change of breast; love's posture perfectly
Once gained, we change no more. The fever grows
Hotter or cooler, as the night wind blows
Fresh gusts of passion on the outer gate.
But we, in waves of frenzy, concentrate
Our thirsty mouths on that hot drinking cup,
Whence we may never suck the nectar up
Too often or too hard; fresh fire invades
Our furious veins, and the unquiet shades
Of night make noises in the darkened room.
Yet, did I raise my head, throughout the gloom
I might behold thine eyes as red as fire
A tigress maddened with supreme desire;
White arms that clasp me; fervent breast that glides

An eager snake, about my breast and sides;
Teeth keen to bite, red tongue that never tires,
And lips ensanguine with unfed desires,
A very beast of prey; hot hands caress,
And violent breath that surfeits not excess.
But raise no head! I know thee, breast and thigh,
Lips, hair, and eyes, and mouth: I will not die
But thou come with me o'er the gate of death.
So, bloody and body furious with breath
That pants through foaming kisses, let us stay
Gripped hard together to kiss life away,
Mouths drowned in murder, never satiate,
Kissing away the hard decrees of Fate,
Kissing insatiable in mad desire,
Kisses whose agony may never tire,
Kissing the gates of hell, the sword of God,
Each unto each a serpent or a rod, {11A}
A well of wine and fire, each unto each,
Whose lips are fain convulsively to reach
A higher heaven, a deeper hell. Ah! day
So soon to dawn, delight to snatch away!
Damned day, whose sunlight fins us as with wine
Drunken, with lust made manifest divine
Devils of darkness, servants unto hell --
Yea, king and queen of Sheol, terrible
Above all fiends and furies, hating more

The high Jehovah, loving Baal Peor,
Our father and our love and our god!
Yea, though he lift his adamant rod
And pierce us through, how shall his anger tame
Fire that glows fiercer for the brand of shame
Thrust in it; so, we who are all fire,
One dull red flare of devilish desire,
The God of Israel shall not quench with tears,
Nor blood of martyrs drawn from myriad spheres,
Nor watery blood of Christ; that blood shall boil
With all the fury of our hellish toil;
His veins shall dry with heat; his bones shall bleach
Cold and detested, picked of dogs, on each
Dry separate dunghill of burnt Golgotha.
But we will wrest from heaven a little star,
The Star of Bethlehem, a lying light
Fit for our candle, and by devils' might

Fix in the vast concave of hell for us
To lume its ghastly shadows murderous,
That in the mirror of the lake of fire
We may behold the image of Desire
Stretching broad wings upon us, and may leap
Each upon other, till our bodies weep
Thick sweet salt tears, till, perfected of shames,
They burn to one another as the flames
Of our hell fuse us into one wild soul:
Then, one immaculate divinest whole,
Plunge, fire, within all fire, dive far to death;
Till, like king Satan's sympathetic breath,
Burn on us as a voice from far above
Strange nameless elements of fire and love;
And we, one mouth to kiss, one soul to lure,
For ever wedded, one, divine, endure {11B}
Far from sun, sea, and spring, from love or light,
Imbedded in impenetrable night;
Deeper than ocean, higher than the sky,
Vaster than petty loves that dream and die,
Insatiate, angry, terrible for lust,
Who shrivel God to adamant dust
By our fierce gaze upon him, who would strive
Under our wrath, to flee away, to dive
Into the deep recesses of his heaven.
But we, one joy, one love, one shame for leaven,
Quit hope and life, quit fear and death and love,

Implacable as God, desired above
All loves of hell or heaven, supremely wed,
Knit in one soul in one delicious bed
More hot than hell, more wicked than all things,
Vast in our sin, whose unredeeming wings
Rise o'er the world, and flap for lust of death,
Eager as any one that travaileth;
So in our lust, the monstrous burden borne
Heavy within the womb, we wait the morn
Of its fulfilment. Thus eternity
Wheels vain wings round us, who may never die
But cling as hard as serpent's wedlock is,
One writhing glory, an immortal kiss.

THE BLOOD-LOTUS.

THE ashen sky, too sick for sleep, makes my face grey; my senses swoon.
Here, in the glamour of the moon, will not some pitying godhead weep

For cold grey anguish of her eyes, that look to God, and look in vain,
For death, the anodyne of pain, for sleep, earth's trivial paradise?

Sleep I forget. Her silky breath no longer fans my ears; I dream
I float on some forgotten stream that hath a savour still of death, {12A}

A sweet warm smell of hidden flowers whose heavy petals kiss the sun,
Fierce tropic poisons every one that fume and sweat through forest hours.

They grow in darkness; heat beguiles their sluggish kisses; in the wood
They breathe no murmur that is good, and Satan in their blossom smiles.

They murder with the old perfume that maddens all men's blood; we die
Fresh from some corpse-clothed memory, some secret redolence of gloom,

Some darkling murmurous song of lust quite strange to man and beast and
bird,
Silent in power, not overheard by any snake that eats the dust.

No crimson-hooded viper knows; no silver-crested asp has guessed
The strange soft secrets of my breast; no leprous cobra shall disclose

The many-seated, multiform, divine, essential joys that these
Dank odours bring, that starry seas wash white in vain; intense and warm

The scents fulfil; they permeate all lips, all arteries, and fire
New murmured music on the lyre that throbs the horrors they create.

Omniscient blossom! Is thy red slack bosom fresher for my kiss?
Are thy loves sharper? Hast thou bliss in all the sorrow of the dead?

Why art thou paler when the moon grows loftier in the troublous sky?
Why dost thou beat and heave when I press lips of fire, hell's princeliest
boon,

To thy mad petals, green and gold like angels' wings, when as a flood
God's essence fills them, and the blood throughout their web grows icy
cold? {12B}

To thy red centre are my eyes held fast and fervent, as at night
Some sad miasma lends a light of strange and silent blasphemies

To lure a soul to hell, to draw some saint's charred lust, to tempt, to
win
Another sacrifice to sin, another poet's heart to gnaw

With dubious remorse. Ho! flame of torturing flower-love! sacrament
Of Satan, triple element of mystery and love and shame,

Green, gold, and crimson, in my heart you strive with Jesus for its realm,
While Sorrow's tears would overwhelm the warriors of either part.

Jesus would lure me: from His side the gleaming torrent of the spear
Withdraws, my soul with joy and fear waits for sweet blood to pour its
tide

Of warm delight -- in vain! so cold, so watery, so slack it flows,
It leaves me moveless as a rose, albeit her flakes are manifold.

He hath no scent to drive men mad; no mystic fragrance from his skin
Sheds a loose hint of subtle sin such as the queen Faustina had.

Thou drawest me. Thy golden lips are carven Cleopatra wise.
Large, full, and moist, within them lies the silver rampart, whence there
slips

That rosy flame of love, the spring of blood at my light bidding spilt;
And thy desires, if aught thou wilt, are softer at my suffering.

Fill up with Death Life's loving-cup! Give me the knowledge, me the power
For some new sin one little hour, provoking Hell to belch us up. {13A}

So in some damned abyss of woe thy chant should dazzle as of old,
Thy kisses burn like molten gold, thy visions swing me to and fro.

Strange fascinations whirl and wind about my spirit lying coils;
Thy charm enticeth, for the spoils of victory, all an evil mind.

Thy perfume doth confound my thought, new longings echo, and I crave
Doubtful liaisons with the grave and loves of Parthia for sport.

I think perhaps no longer yet, but dream and lust for stranger things

Than ever sucked the lips of kings, or fed the tears of Mahomet.

Quaint carven vampire bats, unseen in curious hollows of the trees,
Or deadlier serpents coiled at ease round carcasses of birds unclean;

All wandering changeful spectre shapes that dance in slow sweet measure
round

And merge themselves in the profound, nude women and distorted apes

Grotesque and hairy, in their rage more rampant than the stallion steed;
There is no help: their horrid need on these pale women they assuage.

Wan breasts too pendulous, thin hands waving so aimlessly, they breathe
Faint sickly kisses, and inweave my head in quiet burial-bands.

The silent troops recede; within the fiery circle of their glance
Warm writhing woman-horses dance a shameless Bacchanal of sin;

Foam whips their reeking lips, and still the flower-witch nestles to my
lips,
Twines her swart lissome legs and hips, half serpent and half devil, till
{13B}

My whole self seems to lie in her; her kisses draw my breath; my face
Loses its lustre in the grace of her quick bosom; sinister

The raving spectres reel; I see beyond my Circe's eyes no shape
Save vague cloud-measures that escape the dance's whirling witchery.

Their song is in my ears, that burn with their melodious wickedness;

But in her heart my sorceress has songs more sinful, that I learn

As she sings slowly all their shame, and makes me tingle with delight
At new debaucheries, whose might rekindles blood and bone to flame.

The circle gathers. negresses howl in the naked dance, and wheel
On poinard-blades of poisoned steel, and weep out blood in agonies;

Strange beast and reptile writhe; the song grows high and melancholy now;
The perfume savours every brow with lust unutterable of wrong.

Clothed with my flower-bride I sit, a harlot in a harlot's dress,
And laugh with careless wickedness that strews the broad road of the Pit

With vine and myrtle and thy flower, my harlot-maiden, who for man
Now first forsakest thy leman, thy Eve, my Lilith, in this bower

Which we indwell, a deathless three, changeless and changing, as the pyre
Of earthly love becomes a fire to heat us through eternity.

I have forgotten Christ at last; he may look back, grown amorous,
And call across the gulf to us, and signal kisses through the vast: {14A}

We shall disdain, clasp faster yet, and mock his newer pangs, and call
With stars and voices musical, jeers his touched heart shall not forget.

I would have pitied him. This flower spits blood upon him; so must I
Cast ashes through the misty sky to mock his faded crown of power,

And with our laughter's nails refix his torn flesh faster to the wood,
And with more cruel zest make good the shackles of the Crucifix.

So be it! In thy arms I rest, lulled into silence by the strain
Of sweet love-whispers, while I drain damnation from thy tawny breast:

Nor heed the haggard sun's eclipse, feeling thy perfume fill my hair,
And all thy dark caresses wear sin's raiment on thy melting lips --

Nay, by the witchcraft of thy charms to sleep, nor dream that God survive;
To wake, this only to contrive -- fresh passions in thy naked arms;

And, at that moment when thy breath mixes with mine, like wine, to call
Each memory, one merged into all, to kiss, to sleep, to mate with death!

THE NATIVITY.

CHRISTMAS 1897.

THE Virgin lies at Bethlehem.
(Bring gold and frankincense and myrrh!)
The root of David shoots a stem.
(O Holy Spirit, pity her!)

She lies alone amid the kine.
(Bring gold and frankincense and myrrh!)

The straw is fragrant as with wine.
(O Holy Spirit, pity her!) {14B}

Mine host protects an honest roof.
(Bring gold and frankincense and myrrh!)
His spouse sniffs loud and holds aloof.
(O Holy Spirit, pity her!)

The Angel has not come again.
(Bring gold and frankincense and myrrh!)
Why did God deal her out such pain?
(O Holy Spirit, pity her!)

Her love-hours held the Holy Ghost.
(Bring gold and frankincense and myrrh!)
Where is he now she needs him most?
(O Holy Spirit, pity her!)

Joseph drinks deep outside the inn.
(Bring gold and frankincense and myrrh!)
She is half hated by her kin.
(O Holy Spirit, pity her!)

The agony increases fast.
(Bring gold and frankincense and myrrh!)
Each spasm is a holocaust.
(O Holy Spirit, pity her!)

There are three kings upon the road.
(Bring gold and frankincense and myrrh!)
She hath thrice cursed the name of God.
(O Holy Spirit, pity her!)

There stands her star above the sky.
(Bring gold and frankincense and myrrh!)
She hath thrice prayed that she may die.
(O Holy Spirit, pity her!)

Her bitter anguish hath sufficed.
(Bring gold and frankincense and myrrh!)
She is delivered of the Christ.
(The angels come to worship her.)

TRANSLATIONS FROM BAUDELAIRE.<<1>>

<<1. The original metres are in all cases closely imitated.>>

CAIN ET ABEL.

I.

SEED of Abel, eat, drink, sleep!
God shall smile complaisantly.
Seed of Cain, in the muck-heap
Crawl and miserably die! {15A}

Seed of Abel, thine oblation
Sweet to Seraphim doth smell:
Seed of Cain, shall thy damnation
Ever find the bounds of Hell?

Race of Abel, see thy seed
And thy cattle flourish more!
Race of Cain, for hunger's need,
Like a dog thy bowels roar.

Seed of Abel, warm thy paunch
At the patriarchal hall!
Seed of Cain, on shivering haunch
Squat in cave, despised jackal!

Seed of Abel, love and swarm!
So thy gold shall also grow.
Seed of Cain, heart over-warm,
Guard thy lust and crush it low!

Seed of Abel, grow, well-faring
Like the bugs in forest beats!
Seed of Cain, at bay, despairing,
Throw thy children on the streets!

II.

Seed of Abel, carrion

Shall make fat the smoking soil.
Seed of Cain, on thee has none
Laid sufficient woes of toil.

Seed of Abel, this thy shame --
To the boar-spear yields the sword.
Seed of Cain, to heaven flame,
And to earth cast Heaven's Lord!

THE LITANY OF SATAN.

O thou, of Angels fairest and most wise,
God by Fate's treachery shorn of liturgies!
O Satan, have pity of my long misery!

O Prince of Exile, Sufferer of wrong,
Whose vengeance, conquered, rises triply strong!
O Satan, have pity of my long misery! {15B}

Who knowest all, of under earth the king,
Familiar healer of man's suffering!
O Satan, have pity of my long misery!

Who to the leper, even the cursed pariah,
Hast taught by love the taste of heavenly fire!
O Satan, have pity of my long misery!

Thou who on Death, thine old and strong leman,
Begottest Hope -- a charming madwoman!
O Satan, have pity of my long misery!

Who knowest in which caves of envious lands
God has hid precious stones with jealous hands!

O Satan, have pity of my long misery!

Thou whose clear eye discerns the arsenals deep,
Where the small folk of buried metals sleep!
O Satan, have pity of my long misery!

Whose broad hand hides the giddy precipice
From sleepers straying about some edifice!
O Satan, have pity of my long misery!

Whose skill makes supple the old bones, at needs,
Of the belated sot, 'mid surging steeds!
O Satan, have pity of my long misery!

Who taught frail man, to make his suffering lighter,
Consoling, to mix sulphur with salt nitre!
O Satan, have pity of my long misery!

O subtle complice, who as blatant Beast
Brandest vile Croesus, him that pities least!
O Satan, have pity of my long misery!

Who in girls' eyes and hearts implantest deep
Lust for the wound, the twain that wound bids weep!
O Satan, have pity of my long misery!

Staff of the exiled, the inventor's spark,
Confessor of hanged men and plotters dark!
O Satan, have pity of my long misery! {16A}

Adopted sire of whom black wrath and power
Of God the Father chased from Eden Bower!
O Satan, have pity of my long misery!

FEMMES DAMNEES.

Like pensive cattle couched upon the sand
They turn their eyes to ocean's distant ring;
Feet seek each other, hand desires hand,
With langour sweet and bitter shuddering.

Some, hearts love-captured with long whispering,
Spell out the love of timorous childhood,

Where babbles in deep dell the gentle spring,
And dive among the young trees of the green wood.

Other, like sisters, slowly, with grave eyes,
Cross the rocks filled with apparitions dim,
Where Antony beheld, like lavers, rise
The nude empurpled breasts that tempted him.

Some, by the dying torch-light call thy name,
In the dumb hollow of old pagan fanes,
To succour feverish shriekings of fierce flame,
O Bacchus, soother of men's ancient pains.

Others, whose throat is thirsty for breast-blood,
To hide a whip 'neath flowing robes are fain,
Mingling in lonely night and darksome wood
The foam of pleasure and the tears of pain.

O virgins, demons, monsters, O martyrs!
Great souls contemptuous of reality!
Seekers for the Infinite, satyrs, worshippers,
Now mad with cries, now torn with agony!

You whom my soul has followed to your hell,
Poor sisters, more beloved than wept by me,
For your fierce woes, your lusts insatiable,
And the urns of love that fill the hearts of ye! {16B}

CARRION.

Recall, my soul, the sight we twain have looked upon
This summer morning soft and sweet,
Beside the path, an infamous foul carrion,
Stones for its couch a fitting sheet.

Its legs stretched in the air, like wanton whores
Burning with lust, and reeking venom sweated,
Laid open, carelessly and cynically, the doors
Of belly rank with exhalations foetid.

Upon this rottenness the sun shone deadly straight
As if to cook it to a turn,
And give back to great Nature hundredfold the debt

That, joining it together, she did earn.

The sky beheld this carcase most superb outspread
As spreads a flower, itself, whose taint
Stank so supremely strong, that on the grass your head
You thought to lay, in sudden faint.

The flies swarmed numberless on this putrescent belly,
Whence issued a battalion
Of larvae, black, that flowed, a sluggish liquid jelly,
Along this living carrion.

All this was falling, rising as the eager seas,
Or heaving with strange crepitation --
Was't that the corpse, swollen out with a lascivious breeze,
Was yet alive by copulation?

And all the carcass now sounded strange symphonies
Like wind, or running water wan,
Or grain that winnower shakes and turns, whene'er he plies
With motion rhythmical his fan. {17A}

The shapes effaced themselves; no more their images
Were aught but dreams, a sketch too slow
To tint the canvas, that the artist finishes
By memory that does not go.

Behind the rocks a bitch unquietly gazed on
Ourselves with eye of wrathful woe,
Watching her time to return unto the skeleton
For tit-bits that she had let go.

Yet you are like to it, this dung, this carrion,
To this infection doubly dire,
Star of my eyes that are, and still my nature's sun,
You, O my angel! You, my own desire!

Yes! such will you be, queen, in graces that surpass,
Once the last sacraments are said;
When you depart beneath wide-spreading blooms and grass
To rot amid the bones of many dead.

Then, O my beauty! tell the worms, who will devour
With kisses all of you to dust;

That I have kept the form and the essential power
Divine of my distorted lust.

THE DENIAL OF ST. PETER.

I.

WHAT makes God then of all the curses deep
That daily reach his Seraphim divine?
Like to a tyrant gorged with meat and wine,
Our blasphemous music lulleth him to sleep.

II.

Tears of the martyrs, and saints tortured,
Must prove intoxicating symphonies,
Since, spite of blood-price paid to gain them ease,
The heavens therewith are not yet satiated. {17B}

III.

Jesus! recall Gethsemane afresh,
Where thy simplicity his pity sought
Who in his heaven heard, and mocked for nought,
Coarse hangmen pierce with nails thy living flesh.

IV.

When on thy godhead spat the virulence
Of scum of soldiery and kitchen-knaves;
When thou didst feel the thorns pierce bloody graves
Within thy brain where Manhood burnt intense;

V.

When thy bruised broken body's horrid weight
Racked thy stretched arms, that sweat and blood enow
Coursed down the marble paleness of thy brow,

Lift up on high, a butt for all men's hate: --

VI.

Dreamedst thou then of those triumphant hours
When, that the eternal promise might abide,
Thy steed a mild she-ass, thou once didst ride
On roads o'erstrewn with branches and fresh flowers;

VII.

When, thy heart beating high with hope and pride,
Thou didst whip out those merchants vile with force,
At last the master? Did not keen remorse
Bite thy soul ere the spear had pierced thy side?

VIII.

I, certes, I shall gladly quit this hell
Where dream and action walk not hand-in-hand!
May I use the brand and perish by the brand!
Saint Peter denied Jesus. He did well. {18A}

GLOIRE ET LOUANGE.

GLORY and praise to thee, O Satan, in the height
Of Heaven, where thou didst rule, and in the night
Of Hell, where conquered, dost dream silently!
Grant that one day my soul 'neath Knowledge-Tree
Rest near thine own soul, when from thy forehead
Like a new temple all its branches spread.

THE FOUNT OF BLOOD.

SOMETIMES I think my blood in waves appears,
Springs as a fount with music in its tears;
I hear it trickling with long murmuring sound,
But search myself in vain to find the wound.

Across the city, as in closed meres,
Making the pavements isles, it disappears;
In it all creatures' thirst relief hath found;
All nature in its scarlet hue is drowned.

I have often prayed these fickle wines to weep
For one day Lethe on my threatening fear --
Wine makes the ear more sharp, the eye more clear.

I have sought in Love forgetfulness and sleep --
My love's a bed of needles made to pierce,
That drink be given to these women fierce!

LA BEATRICE.

AS I one day to nature made lament
In burnt-up lands, calcined of nutriment,
As in my musing thought's vague random dart
I slowly poised my dagger o'er my heart,
I saw in full noon o'er my forehead form
A deathly cloud far pregnant with the storm,
That bore a flock of devils vicious
Most like to dwarfs cruel and curious. {18B}
Coldly they set themselves to gaze on me,
Like passers-by a madman that they see --
I heard them laugh and chuckle, as I think,
Now interchange a signal, now a wink.
"Let us at leisure view this caricature,
This shade of Hamlet mimicking his posture,
The doubting look and hair flung wide to wind!
A pity, eh? to see this merry hind,
This beggar, actor out of work, this droll,
Because he plays artistically his role,
Wishing to interest in his chanted woes
Brooks, eagles, crickets, every flower that blows,
And even to us the rubric old who made
To howl out publicly his wild tirade?"
I could have (for my pride is mountains high,
And dominates cloud tops or demon's cry) --
I could have simply turned my sovereign head,
Had I not seen, 'mid their obscene herd led,
Crime, that the sun has not yet brought to book,
Queen of my spirit with the peerless look.

And she laughed with them at my dark distress,
And turned them oft some dirtiest caress.

LE VIN DU SOLITAIRE.

THE strange look of a woman of the town,
Who glides toward us like the rays that slake
the wave-wrought moon within the trembling lake,
Where she would dip her careless beauty down;
The last crown unto which a gambler's fingers cling;
A libertine caress from hungry Adeline;
The sound of music, lulling, silver, clean,
Like the far cry of human suffering:

All these, deep bottle! are of little worth
Beside the piercing balm thy fertile girth
Holds in the reverent poet's lifted soul;
To him thou givest youth, and hope, and life,
And pride, this treasure of all beggar's strife
That gives us triumph, Godhead, for its dole. {19A}

CHALDEAN FOOLS.

CHALDEAN fools, who prayed to stars and fires,
Believed there was a God who punished liars.
These gods of theirs they often would invoke,
Apparently with excellent effect:
They trusted to escape the penal smoke
By making Truth the trade-mark of their sect.

How fortunate that we are Christian Folk,
And know these notions to be incorrect!

CALL OF THE SYLPHS.<<1>>

<<1. This Fragment is a paraphrase of one of the elemental invocations
given in Dr. Dee's famous record of magical working. -- A.C.>>

BEHOLD, I am; a circle on whose hands
The twelvefold Kingdom of my Godhead stands.
Six are the mighty seats of living breath,

The rest sharp sickles, or the horns of death,
Which are, and are not, save in mine own power.

Sleep they? They rise at mine appointed hour.
I made ye stewards in the primal day,
And set your thrones in my celestial way.
I gave ye power above the moving time
That all your vessels to my crown might climb.
From all the corners of your fortress caves
Ye might invoke me, and your wise conclaves
Should pour the fires of increase, life and birth,
Continual dewfall to the thirsty earth.
Thus are ye made of Justice and of Truth,
The Souls of Fury, and the Lords of Ruth.
In His great Name, your God's, I say, arise!
Behold! His mercies murmur in the skies.
His Name is mighty in us to the end.
In Him we cry: Move, answer, and descend!
Apply yourselves to us; arise! For why?
We are the Wisdom of your God most high! {19B}

INVOCATION.<<1>>

<<1.Versified from the Manuscript called "HB:Shin of HB:Shin in Z2." -- A.C.
Z2 was a MS. of magical formulae given to advanced members of the Zelator
Adeptus Minor grade in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.>>

O SELF Divine! O Living Lord of Me!
Self-shining flame, begotten of Beyond!
Godhead immaculate! Swift tongue of fire,
Kindled from that immeasurable light
The boundless, the immutable. Come forth,
My God, my lover, spirit of my heart,
Heart of my soul, white virgin of the Dawn,
My Queen of all perfection, come thou forth
From thine abode beyond the Silences
To me the prisoner, me the mortal man,
Shrined in this clay: come forth, I say, to me,
Initiate my quickened soul; draw near,
And let the glory of thy godhead shine
Through all the luminous aethers of the air
Even to earth, thy footstool; unto me
Who by these sacred invocations draw
The holy influence within myself,

To strengthen and to purify my will

And holy aspiration to thy Life.
Purge me and consecrate until my heart
Burn through the very limit of the veil,
And rend it at the hour of sacrifice
That even the secret pillar in the midst
May be made manifest to mortal eyes.
Behold upon my right hand and my left
The mighty pillars of amazing fire,
And terrible cloud. Their tops in Heaven are veiled,
Whereon the everlasting lamps rejoice.
Their pedestals upon the Universe
Are set in rolling clouds, in thunder-gusts,
In vivid flame, and tempest: but to me,
Balanced between them, burns the holy light
Veilless, one liquid wheel of sacred fire,
Whirling immutably within itself
And formulating in the splendid sun
Of its white moony radiance, in the light
Of its immaculate eternity,
Thy glorious vision! O thou Starlight face,
And crowned diamond of my self and soul, {20A}
Thou Queenly Angel of my Higher Will,
Form in my spirit a more subtle fire
Of God, that I may comprehend the more
The sacred purity of thy divine
Essence! O Queen, O Goddess of my life,
Light unbegotten, Scintillating spark
Of the All-Self! O holy, holy Spouse
Of my most godlike thought, come forth! I say,
And manifest unto thy worshipper
In more candescent fulgours! Let the air
Ring with the passion of my holy cry
Unto the Highest. For persistent will
And the continual fervour of my soul
Have led me to this hour of victory,
This throne of splendour. O thou Beauty's Self,
Thou holiest Crown thus manifest to me,
Come forth, I say, come forth! With mightier cries
Than Jesus uttered on the quivering cross:
"Eli, Eli, lamma sabachthani,"
Thee, thee, thee only I invoke! O Soul
Of my own spirit, let thy fervid eyes
Give me their light: for thou dost stand, as God

Among the Holy Ones. Before the gods
Thy music moves, coequal, coeterne,
Thou, Lord of Light and Life and Love! Come forth!
I call thee in the holiest name of Him
Lord of the Universe, and by His Name,
Jesus, the Godhead passing through the gates
Of Hell, that even there the rescuers
Might find the darkness, and proclaim the light;
For I invoke thee by the sacred rites
And secret words of everlasting power:
By the swift symbol of the Golden Dawn
And all its promise, by the Cross of Fire,
And by the Gleaming Symbol: by the Rose
And Cross of Light and Life: the holy Ankh,
The Rose of Ruby and the Cross of Gold.
By these I say, Come forth! my holy Spouse,
And make me one with thine abundant ray {20B}
Of the vast ocean of the unmanifest
Limitless Negativity of Light
Flowing, in Jesus manifest, through space,
In equilibrium, upon the world
Illumined by the White Supernal Gleam
Through the red Cross of Calvary: Come forth,
My actual Self! Come forth, O dazzling one,
Wrapped in the glory of the Holy Place
Whence I have called thee: Come thou forth to me,
And permeate my being, till my face
Shine with thy light reflected, till my brows
Gleam with thy starry symbol, till my voice
Reach the Ineffable: Come forth, I say,
And make me one with thee: that all my ways
May glitter with the holy influence,
That I may be found worthy at the end
To sacrifice before the Holy Ones:
That in thy Glory, Strength, and Majesty,
And by the Beauty and Harmony of Heaven
That fills its fountains at the Well of Life,
I may be mighty in the Universe.
Yea, come thou forth, I mightily conjure
Thy radiant Perfection, to compel
All Spirits to be subject unto Me,
That every spirit of the Firmament
And of the Ether, and upon the Earth
And under Earth, and of the stable land,

Of water, of the whirling of the air,
Of the all-rushing fire; and every Spell
And scourge of God the Vast One may be made
Obedient unto me, to the All-Good
And ultimate Redemption: Hear me, thou!

Eca, zodacare, Iad, goho,
Torzodu odo kikale qaa!
Zodacare od zodameranu!
Zodorje, lape zodiredo Ol
Noco Mada, das Iadapiel!
Ilas! hoatahe Iaida!<<1>>

<<1. This conjuration is in the "angelic" language of Dr. Dee. See the
edition of Goetia published by the S.P.R.T.>>

O crowned with starlight! Winged with emerald {21A}
Wider than Heaven! O profounder blue
Of the abyss of water! O thou flame
Flashing through all the caverns of the night,
Tongues leaping from the immeasurable
Up through the glittering Steeps unmanifest
To the ineffable! O Golden Sun!
Vibrating glory of my higher self!
I heard thy voice resounding in the Abyss:
"I am the only being in the deep
Of Darkness: let me rise and gird myself
To tread the path of Darkness: even so
I may attain the light. For from the Abyss
I came before my birth: from those dim halls
And silence of a primal sleep! And He,
The voice of Ages, answered me and said:
Behold! for I am He that formulates
In darkness! Child of Earth! the Light doth shine
In darkness, but the darkness understands
No ray of that initiating light!"
Now, by Initiation's dangerous path
And groping aspiration, came I forth
Where the White Splendour shone upon the Throne,
Even to the Temple of the Holy Ones:
Now, by that Light, come forth, I say, to me,
My Lady of the Starlight and the Moon!
Come and be absolute within my mind,

That I may take no dim remembrance back

to drown this glory with earth's quivering gloom.

But, O abide within Me! Every hour
I need the lofty and the limpid stream
Of that White Brilliance: Leave me not alone,
O Holy Spirit! Come to comfort me,
To draw me, and to make me manifest,
Osiris to the weeping world; that I
Be lifted up upon the cross of Pain
And Sacrifice, to draw all human kind
And every germ of matter that hath life,
Even after me, to the ineffable
Kingdom of Light! O holy, holy Queen!
Let thy wide pinions overshadow me!

I am, the Resurrection and the Life!
The Reconciler of the Light and Dark.
I am the Rescuer of mortal things.
I am the Force in Matter manifest. {21B}
I am the Godhead manifest in flesh.
I stand above, among the Holy Ones.
I am all-purified through suffering,
All-perfect in the mystic sacrifice,
And in the knowledge of my Selfhood made
One with the Everlasting Lords of Life.
The Glorified through Trial is My Name.
The Rescuer of Matter is My Name.
I am the Heart of Jesus girt about
With the Swift Serpent! I, Osirified,
Stand in this Hall of Twofold Truth and say:
Holy art Thou, Lord of the Universe!
Holy art Thou, whom Nature hath not formed!
Holy art Thou, O Vast and Mighty One!
O Lord of Darkness and O Lord of Light!
Holy art Thou, O Light above all Gods!
O Holy, Holy, Holy, Holy King
Ineffable, O Consciousness Divine
I whose white Presence, even I, a god,
A god of gods, prostrate myself and say:
I am the spark of Thine abundant flame.
I am the flower, and Thou the splendid Sun
Wherefrom my Life is drawn! All hail to Thee,
For Holy, Holy, Holy, is Thy Name!

Holy art Thou, O Universal Lord!
Holy art Thou, whom Nature hath not formed!

Holy art Thou, the Vast and Mighty One!
O Lord of Darkness and O Lord of Light!

I see the Darkness fall as lightning falls!
I watch the Ages like a torrent roll
Past Me: and as a garment I shake off
The clinging skirts of Time. My place is fixed
In the abyss beyond all Stars and Suns.
I AM, the Resurrection and the Life!

Holy art Thou, Lord of the Universe!
Holy art Thou, whom Nature hath not formed!
Holy art Thou, the Vast and Mighty One!
O Lord of Darkness and O Lord of Light! {22A}

HYMN TO APOLLO.

"Written in the Temple of Apollo."

GOD of the golden face and fiery forehead!
Lord of the Lion's house of strength, exalted
In the Ram's horns! O ruler of the vaulted
Heavenly hollow!
Send out thy rays majestic, and the torrid
Light of thy song! thy countenance most splendid
Bend to the suppliant on his face extended!
Hear me, Apollo!

Let thy fierce fingers sweep the lyre forgotten!
Recall the ancient glory of thy chanted
Music that thrilled the hearts of men, and haunted
Life to adore thee!
Cleanse thou our market-places misbegotten!
Fire in my heart and music to my paeon
Lend, that my song bow, past the empyrean,
Phoebus, before thee!

All the old worship in this land is broken;
Yet on my altar burns the ancient censer,
Frankincense, saffron, galbanum, intenser!

Ornaments glisten.
Robes of thy colour bind me for thy token.
My voice is fuller in thine adoration.

Thine image holds its god-appointed station.
Lycian, listen!

My prayers more eloquent than olden chants
Long since grown dumb on the soft forgetful airs --
My lips are loud to herald thee: my prayers
Keener to follow.
I do aspire, as thy long sunbeam slants
Upon my crown; I do aspire to thee
As no man yet -- I am in ecstasy!
Hear me, Apollo!

My chant wakes elemental flakes of light
Flashing along the sandal-footed<<1>> floor.
All listening spirits answer and adore
Thee, the amazing! {22B}
I follow to the eagle-baffling sight,
Limitless oceans of abounding space;
Purposed to bind myself, but know thy face,
Phoebus, in gazing.

<<1. Strewn with sandalwood(?)>>

O hear me! hear me! hear me! for my hands,
Dews deathly bathe them; sinks the stricken song;
Eyes that were feeble have become the strong,
See thee and glisten.
Blindness is mine; my spirit understands,
Weighs out the offering, accepts the pain,
Hearing the paeon of the unprofane!
Lycian, listen!

God of the fiery face, the eyes inviolate!
Lord of soundless thunders, lightnings lightless!
Hear me now, for joy that I see thee sightless,
Fervent to follow.
Grant one boon; destroy me, let me die elate,
Blasted with light intolerant of a mortal,
That the undying in me pass thy portal!
Hear me, Apollo.

Hear me, or if about thy courts be girded
Paler some purple softening the sunlight
Merciful, mighty, O divide the one light

Into a million
Shattered gems, that I mingle in my worded
Measures some woven filament of passion
Caught, Phoebus, from thy star-girt crown, to fashion
Poet's pavilion.

Let me build for thee an abiding palace
Rainbow-hued to affirm thy light divided,
Yet where starry words, by thy soul guided,
Sing as they glisten,
Dew-drops diamonded from the abundant chalice!
Swoons the prayer to silence; pale the altar
Glowes at thy presence as the last words falter --
Lycian, listen! {23A}

THE HERMIT'S HYMN TO SOLITUDE.

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammasambuddhasa.
Venerable Lord and Best of Friends.

We, seeing the cycle in which Maha Brahma is perhaps more a drifting buoy than ourselves, knowing that it is called the walking in delusion, the puppet show of delusion, the writing of delusion, the fetter of delusion, are aware that the way out of the desert is found by going into the desert. Will you, in your lonely lamaserai, accept this hymn from me, who, in the centre of civilisation, am perhaps more isolated than you in your craggy fastness among the trackless steppes of your Untrodden Land?

ALEISTER CROWLEY.

PARIS, A.B. 2446.

I.

MIGHTIEST self! Supreme in Self-contentment!
Sole Spirit gyring in its own ellipse;
Palpable, formless, infinite presentment
Of thine own light in thine own soul's eclipse!
Let thy chaste lips
Sweep through the empty aethers guarding thee
(As in a fortress girded by the sea
The raging winds and wings of air

Lift the wild waves and bear
Innavigable foam to seaward), bend thee down,
Touch, draw me with thy kiss
Into thine own deep bliss,
Into thy sleep, thy life, thy imperishable crown!

Let that young godhead in thine eyes
Pierce mine, fulfil me of their secrecies,
Thy peace, thy purity, thy soul impenetrably wise.

II.

All things which are complete are solitary;
The circling moon, the unconscious drift of stars,
The central systems. Burn they, change they, vary?
Theirs is no motion beyond the eternal bars.
Seasons and scars {23B}
Stain not the planets, the unfathomed home,
The spaceless, unformed faces in the dome
Brighter and blacker than all things,
Borne under the eternal wings
No whither: solitary are the winter woods
And caves not habited,
And that supreme grey head
Watching the groves: single the foaming amber floods,
And O! most lone
The melancholy mountain shrine and throne,
While far above all things God sits, the ultimate alone!

III.

I sate upon the mossy promontory
Where the cascade cleft not his mother rock,
But swept in whirlwind lightning foam and glory,
Vast circling with unwearying luminous shock
To lure and lock
Marvellous eddies in its wild caress;
And there the solemn echoes caught the stress,
The strain of that impassive tide,
Shook it and flung it high and wide,
Till all the air took fire from that melodious roar;
All the mute mountains heard,
Bowed, laughed aloud, concurred,
And passed the word along, the signal of wide war.
All earth took up the sound,
And, being in one tune securely bound,

Even as a star became the soul of silence most profound.

IV.

Thus there, the centre of that death that darkened,
I sat and listened, if God's voice should break
And pierce the hollow of my ear that harkened,

Lest God should speak and find me not awake --
For his own sake. {24A}
No voice, no song might pierce or penetrate
That enviable universal state.
The sun and moon beheld, stood still.
Only the spirit's axis, will,
Considered its own soul and sought a deadlier deep,
And in its monotone mood
Of supreme solitude
Was neither glad nor sad because it did not sleep;
But with calm eyes abode
Patient, its leisure that glactic load, <<1>>
Abode alone, nor even rejoiced to know that it was God.

<<1. Via Lactea, the "Milky Way.">>

V.

All change, all motion, and all sound, are weakness!
Man cannot bear the darkness which is death.
Even that calm Christ, manifest in meekness,
Cried on the cross and gave his ghostly breath,
On the prick of death,
Voice, for his passion could not bear nor dare
The interlunar, the abundant air
Darkened, and silence on the shuddering
Hill, and the unbeating wing
Of the legions of His Father, and so died.
But I, should I be still
Poised between fear and will?
Should I be silent, I, and be unsatisfied?
For solitude shall bend
Self to all selffulness, and have one friend,
Self, and behold one God, and be, and look beyond the End.

VI.

O Solitude! how many have mistaken
Thy name for Sorrow's, or for Death's or Fear's!

Only thy children lie at night and waken --
How shouldst thou speak and say that no man hears?
O Soul of Tears!
For never hath fallen as dew thy word,
Nor is thy shape showed, nor as Wisdom's heard {24B}
Thy crying about the city
In the house where is no pity,

But in the desolate halls and lonely vales of sand:
Not in the laughter loud,
Nor crying of the crowd,
But in the farthest sea, the yet untravelled land.
Where thou hast trodden, I have trod;
Thy folk have been my folk, and thine abode
Mine, and thy life my life, and thou, who art thy God, my God.

VII.

Draw me with cords that are not; witch me chanted
Spells never heard nor open to the ear,
Woven of silence, moulded in the haunted
Houses where dead men linger year by year.
I have no fear
To tread thy far irremeable way
Beyond the paths and palaces of day,
Beyond the night, beyond the skies,
Beyond eternity's
Tremendous gate; beyond the immanent miracle.<<1>>
O secret self of things!
I have nor feet nor wings
Except to follow far beyond Heaven and Earth and Hell,
Until I mix my mood
And being in thee, as in my hermit's hood
I grow the thing I contemplate -- that selfless solitude!

<<1. The universe.>>

THE STORM.

"Written on the North Atlantic Ocean."

IN the sorrow of the silence of the sunset, when the world's heart sinks
to sleep,
And the waking wind arises from the wedding of the aether and the deep,

There are perfumes through the saltness of the even; there are hints of
flowers afar;
And the God goes down lamented by the lonely vesper star. {25A}

The monsters rise around us as we move in moving mist,
Slow whales that swim as musing, and lo! or ever we wist,
Looms northward in the grey, mysterious ice, cathedral high,
Clad in transparent clouds of cold, as a ghost in drapery.

The solemn dusk descending creeps around us from the East;
Clouded as with the ungainly head of a mysterious beast.
Long wisps of darkness (even as fingers) reach and hold
The sobbing West toward them, clasp the barred Hesperian gold.

Still pale a rose reflection lingers, in pure soft blue;
Even above the tempest, where a lonely avenue
Leads from the wan moon's image, shadowy in the air,
Waning, half hidden from the sun -- and yet her soul is there.

So stand I looking ever down to the rolling sea,
Breast-heaves of a sleeping mother, spouse of Eternity:
The dark deep ocean mother, that another<<1>> hath reviled,
Calling her bitter and barren -- and am I not her child?

<<1. It is not know to whom Crowley refers.>>

O mother sea, O beautiful, more excellent than earth,
How is thy travail understood, except thou give me birth?
O waves of death, O saltness, O sorrow manifold!
I see beneath thy darkness azure; deeper still, the heart of gold. {25B}

Am I not true, O mother, who hast held the lives of men
Sucked down to thy swart bosom -- O render not again!
Keep thou our life and mix it with thine eternal sleep:
Rest, let us rest from passion there, deep! O how deep!

Deep calleth unto deep, Amen! hast thou no passion, thou?
Even now the white flames kindle on thy universal brow.
I hear white serpents hiss and wild black dragons roll;
And the storm of love is on thee -- ah! shall it touch thy soul?

Nay, O my mother, in eternal calm thy virginal depths lie.
The peace of God, that passeth understanding, that am I!

Even I, perceiving deeply beneath the eyes of flame
The soul that, kindling, is not kindled: I have known thy Name.

Awake, O soaring billows! Lighten the raging dome,
Wrap the wide horizon in a single cloak of flaming foam,
Leap in your fury! Beat upon the shores unseen! Devour your food,
The broken cliff, the crumbled bank, the bar. I know the mood.

Even so I see the terror of universal strife:

Murderous war, and murderous peace, and miserable life:
The pang of childbirth, and the pain of youth, and the fear of age,
Life tossed and broken into dust in the elemental rage.

Is not God part of every the tiniest spark of man?
Is He not moulded also in His own eternal plan? {26A}
Even so; as the woes of earth is the angry crested sea.
Even so; as Her great peace abideth in the deep -- so He!

What wreck floats by us? What pale corpse rolls horribly above,
Tossed on the unbewailing foam, cast out of light and life and love?
The sea shall draw thee down, O brother, to her breast of peace,
Her unimaginable springs, her bridal secrecies.

Even so draw me in life, O mother, to thy breast!
Below the storm, below the wind, to the abiding rest!
That I may know thy purpose and understand thy ways:
So, weeping always for the woe, also the love to praise!

The darkness falls intensely: no light invades the gloom.
Stillness drops dew-like from the heaven's unreverberant womb.
Westward the ship is riding on the sable wings of night,
I understand the darkness -- why should I seek the light?

ASSUMPTA CANIDIA.

"Written in Mexico City."

WATERS that weep upon the barren shore
Where some lone mystery of man abides;
As if the wailing of forsaken brides,
Rapt from the kiss of love for evermore,
Impressed its memory on the desolate

Sounds at its edge; on such a strand of tears
I linger through the long forgetful years,
My sin for mother, and my woe for mate.
I am a soul lost utterly -- forbear!
I am unworthy both of tear and prayer. {26B}

The mystic slumber of my sense forlorn
Stirs only now and then; some deeper pang
Reminds despair there is a sharper fang,
Reminds my night of a tempestuous morn.

For I am lost and lonely: in the skies
I see no hope of any sun or star;
On earth there blooms no rose, no nenuphar;
No cross is set for hope of sacrifice.
I cannot sleep, I cannot wake; and death
Passes me by with his desired breath.

No shadow in my mind to prove a sun;
No sorrow to declare that joy exists;
A cycle of dim spectres in the mists
Moves just a little; lastly there is One,
One central Being, one elusive shape,
Not to aspire to, not to love; alas!
Only a memory in the aged mass
Of chained ones bound to me without escape!
Oh, doom of God! Oh, brand how worse than Cain's!
Divided being, undivided pains!

What is this life? (To call it life that grows
No inch throughout all time.) This bitterness
Too weak and hateful to be called distress?
Slow memory working backward only knows
There was some horror grown to it for kin;
Some final leprous growth that took my brain,
Weaving a labyrinth of dullest pain
From the sweet scarlet threat I thought was sin.
I cannot sin! Alas, one sin were sweet!
But sin is living -- and we cannot meet!

So long ago, so miserably long!
I was a maiden -- oh how rich and rare
Seemed the soft sunshine woven in my hair!
How keen the music of my body's song!

How white the bosom of my body's light!
How red the lips, how languorous the eyes,
How made for pleasure, for the sleepy sighs {27A}
Softer than sleep; amorous dew-dreams of night
That draw out night in kisses to the day!
So was I to my seeming as I lay.

That soft smooth-moving ocean of the west
Under the palm and cactus as it rolled,
Immortal blue, fixed with immortal gold,
Moving in rapture with my sleeping breast!

The young delicious green, the drunken smell
Of the fresh earth, the luxury of the glow
Where many colours mingled into snow,
Song-marvels in the air desirable.
So lazily I lay, and watched my eyes
In the deep fountain's sun-stirred harmonies.

I loved myself! O Thou! (I cried) divine
Woman more lovely than the flowers of earth!
O Self-hood softer than the babe at birth,
Sweeter than love, more amorous than wine,
Where is thy peer upon the face of life?
I love myself, the daughter of the dawn.
Come, silken night, in your deep wings withdrawn
Let me be folded, as a tender wife
In my own arms imagined! Let me sleep,
Unwaking from the admirable deep!

My arms fell lazily about the bed.
I lay in some delicious trance. I fell
Deep through sleep's chambers to the gate of Hell,
And on that flaming portalice I read
The legend, "Here is beauty, here delight,
Here love made more desirable than thine,
Fiercer than light, more dolorous than wine.
Here the embraces of the Sons of Night!
Come, sister, come; come, lonely queen of breath!
Here are the lustres and the flames of death."

Hence I was whirled, as in a wind of light,
Out to the fragrance of a loftier air,
A keener scent, and rising unaware

Out of the Palace of Luxurious Night, {27B}
I came to where the Gate of Heaven shone,
Battled with comet and with meteor.
Behold within that crested House of War,
One central glory of a sapphire stone,
Whereon there breathed a sense, a mist, a sun!
I stood and laughed upon the Ancient One.

For He was silent as my body's kiss,
And sleeping as my many-coloured hair,
And living as my eyes and lips; and where
The vast creation round him cried "He Is!",

No murmur reached Him; He was set alone,
Alone and central. Ah! my eyes were dim.
I worshipped even; for I envied Him.
So, moving upward to the azure throne,
I spread my arms unto that ambient mist;
Lifted my life and soul up to be kissed!

A million million voices roared aloud!
A million million sabres flashed between!
Flamed the vast falchion! Fiery Cherubin
Flung me astounded to the mist and cloud.
A stone, flung downward through eternal space,
I dropped. What bitter curses and despair
Rang through wide aether! How the trumpet blare
Cursed back at me! Thou canst not see His Face!
Equal and Spouse? Bring forth the Virgin Dower,
Eternal Wisdom and Eternal Power!

I woke! and in a well's untroubled pool
I saw my face -- and I was ugly now!
Blood-spattered ebony eyelash and white brow!
Blood on my lips, and hair, and breast! "Thou fool!"
A horrid torture in my heart -- and then
I licked my lips: the tigress tasted blood.
My changed features -- wash them in the flood
Of murder! This is power over men
And angels. I will lift the twisted rod,
And make my power as the power of God! {28A}

I made my beauty as it was before.
I learned strange secrets; by my love and skill

I bent creation to my wanded will.
I tuned the stars, I bound the bitter shore
Beyond the Pleiads: until the Universe
Moved at my mantra<<1>>: Heaven and Hell obeyed;
Creation at my orders stayed or swayed.
"Take back," I cried, "the mockery of a curse!"
"I wield Thy Power." With my magic rod
Again I strode before the Throne of God.

<<1. The Hindu equivalent for "spell.">>

"Forgone my Virgin Splendour! I aspire
No longer as a maiden to thy Love.

We twain are set in majesty above:
My cloud is mighty as thy mystic Fire."
Vanished the mist, the light, the sense, the throne!
Vanished the written horror of the curse;
Vanished the stars, the sun, the Universe.
I was in Heaven, lost, alone. Alone!
A new curse gathered as a sombre breath:
"Power without Wisdom is the Name of Death!"

And therefore form my devastating hand
(for I was then unwilling to be dead)
I loosed the lightning, and in hate and dread
Despairing, did I break the royal wand.
Mortal, a plaything for a thousand fears,
I found the earth; I found a lonely place
To gaze for ever on the ocean's face,
Lamenting through the lamentable years;
Without a god, deprived of life and death,
Sensible only to that sombre breath.

Thus wait I on the spring-forgotten shore;
Looking with vain unweeping eyes, for aye
Into the wedding of the sea and sky,
(That do not wed, ay me!) for evermore
Hopeless, forgetting even to aspire
Unto that Wisdom; miserably dumb;
Waiting for the Impossible to come,
Whether in mercy or damnation dire -- {18B}
I who have been all Beauty and all Power! --
This is thine hour, Apollyon, thine Hour!

I, who have twice beheld the awful throne;
And, as it were the vision of a glass,
Beheld the Mist be born thereon, and pass;
I, who have stood upon the four-square stone!
I, who have twice been One---! Woe, woe is me!
Lost, lost, upon the lifeless, deathless plane,
The desert desolate, the air inane;
Fallen, O fallen to eternity!
I, who have looked upon the Lord of Light;
I, I am Nothing, and dissolved in Night!

(THE SPIRIT OF GOD, DESCENDING, ASSUMETH HER INTO THE GLORY OF
GOD.)

VENUS.

"Written in the temple of the L.I.L., <<1>> No. 9, Central America."

<<1. A secret Order, probably established by Crowley himself.>>

MISTRESS and maiden and mother, immutable mutable soul!
Love, shalt thou turn to another? Surely I give thee the whole!
Light, shall thou flicker or darken? Thou and thy lover are met.
Bend from thy heaven and hearken! Life, shalt thou fade or forget?

Surely my songs are gone down as leaves in the dark that are blown;
Surely the laurel and crown have faded and left me alone.
Vainly I cry in the sunlight; moon pities my passion in vain.
Dark to my eyes is the one light, aching in bosom and brain.

Surely, O mother, thou knowest! Have I not followed thy star?
I have gone whither thou goest, bitterly followed afar, {29A}
Buried my heart in thy sorrow, cast down my soul at thy knees.
Thou, thou hast left me no morrow. Days and desires, what are these?

Nay, I have torn from my breast passion and love and despair:
Sought in thy palaces rest, sleep that awaited me there;
Sleep that awaits me in vain: I have done with the hope of things;
Passion and pleasure and pain have stung me, and lost their stings.

Only abides there a hollow, void as the heart of the earth.

Echo may find it and follow, dead from the day of her birth.
Life, of itself not insatiate; death, not presuming to be;
Share me intense and emaciate, waste me, are nothing to me.

Still in the desolate place, still in the bosom that was
Even as a veil for thy face, thy face in a breathed-on glass,
Hangs there a vulture, and tears with a beak of iron and fire.
I know not his name, for he wears no feathers of my desire.

It is thou, it is thou, lone maiden! My heart is a bird that flies
Far into the azure laden with love-lorn songs and cries.
O Goddess of Nature and Love! Thyself is the lover I see.
But thou art in the above, and thy kiss is not for me.

Thou art all too far for my kiss; thou art hidden past my prayer.

Thy wing too wide, and the bliss too sweet for me to share.
Thou art Nature and God! I am broken in the wheelings of thy car;
Thy love-song unheard or unspoken, and I cannot see thy star. {29B}

Thou art not cold, but bitter is thy burning cry to me.
My tiny heart were fitter for a mortal than for thee.
But I cast away the mortal, and I choose the tortured way,
And I stand before thy portal, and my face is cold and grey.

Thou lovest me with a love more terrible than death;
But thou art in the above, and my wings feel no wind's breath.
Thou art all too fierce and calm, too bitter and sweet, alas!
Thou weavest a cruel charm on my soul that is as glass.

I know thee not, who art naked; I lie beneath thy feet
Who hast called till my spirit ached with a pang too deathly sweet.
Thou has given thee to me dying, and made thy bed to me.
I shiver, I shrink, and, sighing, lament it cannot be.

I have no limbs as a God's to close thee in and hold:
Too brief are my periods, and my hours are barren of gold.
I am not thewed as Jove to kill thee in one caress!
Not a golden shower is my love, but a child's tear of distress.

Give me the strength of a panther, the tiger's strenuous sides,
The lion's limbs that span there some thrice the turn of the tides,
The mutinous fame, the terror of the royal Minotaur,
That our loves may make a mirror of the dreadful soul of war!

For love is an equal soul, and shares an equal breath.
I am nought -- and thou the whole? It were not love, but Death. {30A}
Give me thy life and strength, let us struggle for mastery,
As the long shore's rugged length that battles with the sea.

I am thine, I am thine indeed! My form is vaster grown,
And our limbs and lips shall bleed on the starry solar throne.
My life is made as thine; my blessing and thy curse
Beget, as foam on wine, a different universe.

I foam and live and leap: thou laughest, fightest, diest!
In agony swift as sleep thou hangest as the Christ.
My nails are in thy flesh; my sweat is on thy brow;
We are one, we are made afresh, we are Love and Nature now.

I am swifter than the wind: I am wider than the sea:
I am one with all mankind: and the earth is made as we.
The stars are spangles bright on the canopy of our bed,
And the sun is a veil of light for my lover's golden head.

O Goddess, maiden, and wife! Is the marriage bed in vain?
Shall my heart and soul and life shrink back to themselves again?
Be thou my one desire, my soul in day as in night!
My mind the home of the Higher! My heart the centre of Light!

A LITANY.<<1>>

<<1. The Table of Correspondences will elucidate any doubtful point in this poem.>>

I.
BLACK thine abyss of noon
Flings forth the thunder-swoon.
Smite us, and slay, Amoun,
Amoun, Achiha! {30B}

II.
Thoth, from the starry space
Flash out the splendid face!
Wisdom, immortal grace,
Thoth, turn to usward!

III.

Deep, deep thy sombre Sea,
Spouse of eternity!
Mother, we cry to Thee:
Hear us, Maut, Mother!

IV.

Sound, sistrion, sound afar!
Shine, shine, O dawning Star!
Flame, flame, O meteor Car!
Isis, Our Lady!

V.

Strike, strike the louder chord!
Draw, draw the flaming sword,
Crowned child and conquering Lord:

Horus, avenger.

VI.

Dawn-star of flaming light,
Five rays in one unite,
Light, Life, Love, Mercy, Might,
Star of the Magi.

VII.

Lift, lift the Cross of Light,
Rose, golden, green, and white,
Rise, rise athwart the night!
Mighty Aeshuri!

VIII.

Flame, flame, thou Blazoned Sun!
Seal-Star of Solomon!
Seven Mysteries in One!
Godhead and Mankind!

IX.

Beauty and life and love!
Let fly thy darling dove!
Bend to us from above,
Lady Ahathor! {31A}

X.
Where light and darkness meet,
There shine thy flaming feet,
There is thy splendid seat;
Mighty Anubi!

XI.
Swift-winged Stability,
Lifting the earth and sky,
Hold me up utterly,
Keep me, O Shuwe!

XII.
Virginal Queen of Earth,
Late love, and last of birth,
Loose, loose the golden girth,
Nephthys, the crowned one!

XIII.
Hail, crowned Harpocrates,
Show, show thy secrecies,
Lotus-throned silences,
Typhon's replacer!

MARCH IN THE TROPICS.

"Written near Manzanillo."

WHAT ails thee, earth? Is not the breath of Spring
Exultant on thy breast? What aileth thee,
O many-mooded melancholy sea?
Hear the swift rush of that triumphant wing!
Listen! the world's whole heart is listening!
In England now the leaf leaps, and the tree
Gleams dewy, and the bird woos noisily.
Here in the tropics now is no such thing.

Dull heavy heat burns through the clouded sky,
And yet no promise of the latter rains.
Earth bears her fruit, but unrefreshed of death.
In winter is no sorrow, in the dry
Harsh spring no joy, while pestilence and pains

Hover like wolves behind the summer's breath. {31B}

NIGHT IN THE VALLEY.

"Written at the foot of Citlaltepetl."

I LAY within the forest's virgin womb
Tranced in the sweetness, nuptial, indolent,
Of the faint breeze and tropical perfume,
And all the music far lone waters lent
Unto the masses of magnolia bloom,
Tall scarlet lilies, and the golden scent
Shed by strange clusters of more pallid flowers,
And purple lustre strewn amid the twilight bowers.

Far, far the pastureless, the unquiet sea
Moaned; far the stately pyramid of cold
Shrouding the stars, arose: sweet witchery

That brought them in the drowsing eye, to fold
The picture in: with winged imagery
That Hermes gathers with that floral gold
Whose triple flower or flame or pinioned light
Lends life to death, and love and colour unto light.

How flames that scarlet stronger than Apollo,
Too swift and warm to know itself a bird!
How the light winds and waves of moonlight follow,
Shot from the West, cadence of Daylight's word!
How flock the tribes of wings within the hollow,
Even as darkness summons home the herd!
The still slow water slackens into sleep.
The rose-glow dies, leaves cold Citlaltepetl's<<1>> steep.

<<1. Called by the Spaniards Orizaba.>>

The chattering voices of the day depart.
Earth folds her limbs and leans her loving breast
Even to all her children: the great heart
Beats solemnly the requiem of rest.
The sea keeps tune; the silent stars upstart
Seeming to sentinel that sombre crest
Where of old time burst out the vulture fire

Cyclopean, that is dead, now, as a man's desire. {32A}

The drowsy cries of night birds, then the song
Lovely and lovelorn in the listening vale,
So wild and tender, swooping down in long
Notes of despair, then lifting the low tale
In golden notes to skyward in one throng
Of clustered silver, so the nightingale
Tunes the wild flute, as dryads he would gather
To roof with music in the palace of the weather,

With love despairing, dying as music dies;
With lost souls' weeping, and the bitter muse
Of such as lift their hearts in sacrifice
On some strange cross, or shed Sicillian dew
Over a sadder lake than Sicily's --
Hark! they are leaping from the valley views
Into the light and laughter and deep grief
Of that immortal heart that sings beyond belief.

How pitiful, how beautiful, the faces!
The long hair shed on shoulders ivory white!
Each note shoots down the dim arboreal spaces
Like amber or like hyaline lit with light.
Each spirit glimmers in the shadowy places
Like hyacinths or emeralds: or the night
Shows them as shadows of some antique gem
Where moonlight fills its cup and flashes into them.

So, in the moony twilight and the splendour
Of music's light, the desolate nightingale
Fills all the interlunar air with tender
Kisses like song, or shrills upon the scale,
Till quivering moonrays shake again, to send her
Luminous tunes through every sleepy vale,
While the slow dancers rhythmically reap
The fairy amaranth, and silver wheat of sleep. {32B}

Now over all that scythe of sleep impending
Mows the pale flowers of vision following;
Dryad and bird and fount and valley blending
Into one dreamy consciousness of spring;
And all the night and all the world is ending,

And all the souls that weep and hearts that sing!
So, as the dew hides in the lotus blossom,
Sleep draws me with her kiss into her bridal bosom.

METEMPSYCHOSIS.

"Written at Vera Cruz."

DIM goes the sun down there behind the tall
And mighty crest of Orizaba's snow:
Here, gathering at the nightfall, to and fro,
Fat vultures, foul and carrion, flap, and call
Their ghastly comrades to the domed wall
That crowns the grey cathedral. There they go --
The parasites of death, decay and woe,
Gorged with the day's indecent festival.

I think these birds were once the souls of priests.
They haunt by ancient habit the old home
Wherein they held high mass in days of old.

But now they soar above it -- for behold!
God hath looked mercifully down on Rome,
Promoting thus her children to be beasts.

ADVICE OF A LETTER.<<1>>

<<1. With a letter to Ceylon, sent from Mexico in duplicate for certainty by way both of England and Japan. The allusions are Hermetic or Alchemical.>>

THE Winged Bull that dwelled in the north
hath flown into the West, and uttered forth
His thunders in the Mountains. He shall come
Where blooms the sempitern chrysanthemum.
The winged Lion, that wrought dire amaze
In the Dark Place, where Light was, did his ways {33A}
Take fiery to enkindle a new flame:
The Eagle of the High Lands yet that came
By the red sunset to an eastern sky
Shall plume himself and gather him and fly
Even as a Man that rideth on a Beast
Trained, to the Golden Dawn-sky of the East.

Therefore his word shall seek the Ivory Isle
By double winds and by the double Style,
Twin doorways of the Sunset and the Dawn.
And thou who tak'st it, shall be subtly drawn
Into strange vigils, and shalt surely see
The ancient form and memory of me,
Nor me distinct, but shining with that Light
Wherein the Sphinx and Pyramid unite.

ON WAIKIKI BEACH.<<1>>

<<1. Near Honolulu.>>

UPHEAVED from Chaos, through the dark sea hurled,
Through the cleft heart of the amazed sea,
Sprang, 'mid deep thunderous throats of majesty,
Titanic, in the waking of the world;
Sprang, one vast mass of spume and molten fire,
Lava, tremendous waves of earth; sprang higher
Than the sea's crest volcano-torn, to be
Written in Cyclopean character,

Hawaii. Here she stands
Queen of all laughter's lands
That dance for dawn, lie tranced in leisured noon,
Dreaming through day towards night,
Craving the perfumed light
Of the stars lustrous, and the gem-born moon.
Dewy with clustered diamond,
The long land swoons to sleep; the sea sleeps and yet wakes beyond. {33B}

Here, in the crescent beach and bay, the sea,
Curven and carven in warm shapes of dream,
Answers the love-song of the liliated stream,
And moves to bridal music. Stern and free,
The lion-shapen headland guards the shore;
The ocean, the bull-throated, evermore
Roars; the vast wheel of heaven turns above,
Its rim of pain, its jewelled heart of love;
Sun-waved, the eagle wing
Of the air of feathered spring
Royally sweeps and on the musical merge
Watches alone the man.

O silvern shape and span
Of moonlight, reaching over the grey, large
Breast of the surf-bound strand,
Life of the earth, God's child, Man's bride, the light of the sweet land!

Are emeralds ever a spark of this clear green,
Or sapphires hints of this diviner blue,
Or rubies shadows of this rosy hue,
Or light itself elsewhere so clear and clean?
For all the sparkling dews of heaven fallen far
Crystalline, fixed, forgotten (as a star
Forgets its nebulous virginity)
Are set in all the sky and earth and sea.
Shining with solar fire,
The single-eyed desire
Of scent and sound and sight and sense perfuses
The still and lambent light
Of the essential night;
And all the heart of me is fain, and muses,
As if for ever doomed to dream
Or pass in peace Lethean adown the grey Lethean stream.

So deep the sense of beauty, and so keen!

The calm abiding holiness of love
Reigns; and so fallen from the heights above {34A}
Immeasurable, the influence unseen
Of music and of spiritual fire,
That the soul sleeps, forgotten of desire,
Only remembering its God-like birth
Reflected in the deity of earth,
Becometh even as God.
The pensive period
Of night and day beats like a waving fan
No more, no more: the years,
Reft of their joys and fears,
Pass like pale faces, leave the life of man
Untroubled of their destinies,
Leave him forgotten of life and time, immortal, calm and wise.

Only the ceaseless surf on coral towers,
The changless change of the unchanging ocean,
Laps the bright night, with unsubstantial motion
Winnowing the starlight, plumed with feathery flowers

Of foam and phosphor glory, the strange glow
Of the day's amber fallen to indigo,
Lit of its own depth in some subtle wise,
A pavement for the footsteps from the skies
Of angels walking thus
Not all unseen of us,
Nor all unknown, nor unintelligible,
When with souls lifted up
In the Cadmean cup, <<1>>
As incense lifted in the thurible,
We know that God is even as we,
Light from the sky, and life on earth, and love beneath the sea.

<<1. See Euripides, "Bacchae.">>

THE TRIADS OF DESPAIR.

"Written off the Coast of Japan."

I.

I LIE in liquid moonlight poured from the exalted orb.
Orion waves his jewelled sword; the tingling waves absorb {34B}
Into their lustre as they move the light of all the sky.

I am so faint for utter love I sigh and long to die.
Far on the misty ocean's verge flares out the southern Cross,
And the long billows on the marge of coral idly toss,
This night of nights! The stars disdain a lustre dusk or dim.
Twin love-birds on the land complain, a wistful happy hymn.
I turn my face toward the main: I laugh and dive and swim.

Now fronts me foaming all the light of surf-bound waters pent;
Now from the black breast of the night the Southern Cross is rent.
I top the might wall of fears; the dark wave rolls below.
A tall swift ship on wings appears, a cataract of snow
Plunging before the white east wind; she meets the eager sea
As forest green by thunder thinned meets fire's emblazonry.
Then I sink back upon the breast of mighty-flinging foam,
Ride like a ghost upon the crest, the silver-rolling comb;
Float like a warrior to his rest, majestically home.

But oh! my soul, what seest thou, whose eyes are open wide?
What thoughts inspire me idling now, lone on the lonely tide?

Here in the beauty of the place, hope laughs and says me nay;
In nature's bosom, in God's face, I read "Decay, Decay."
Here in the splendour of the Law that built the eternal sphere,
Beauty and majesty and awe, I fail of any cheer.
Here, in caprice, in will divine, I see no perfect peace; {35A}
Here, in the Law's impassive shrine, no hope is of release.
All things escape me, all repine, all alter, ruin, cease.

II.

But thou, O Lord, O Apollo,
Must thou utterly change and pass?
Thy light be lost in the hollow?
Thy face as a maid's in a glass
Go out and be lost and be broken
As the face of the maid is withdrawn,
And thy people with sorrow unspoken
Wait, wait for the dawn?

But thou, O Diana, our Lady,
Shall it be as if never had been?
The vales of the sea grown shady
And silver and amber and green
As thy light passed over and kissed them?
Shall thy people lament thee and swoon,
And we miss thee if thy love missed them,

Awaiting the moon?

But thou, who art Light, and above them,
Who art fire and above them as fire,
Shall thy sightless eyes not love them
Who are all of thine own desire?
Immaculate daughters of passion,
Shalt thou as they pass be past?
And thy people bewail thee, Thalassian,
Lost, lost at the last?

III.

Nay, ere ye pass your people pass,
As snow on summer hills,
As dew upon the grass,
As one that love fulfils,
If he in folly wills
Love a lass.

Yet on this night of smiles and tears
A maiden is the theme.
The universe appears
An idle summer dream
Lost in the grey supreme
Mist of years. {35B}

For she is all the self I own,
And all I want of will.
She speaks not, and is known.
Her window shining chill
Whispers "He lingers still.
I am alone."

IV.
But to-night the lamp must be wasted,
And the delicate hurt must ache,
And the sweet lips moan untasted,
My lady lie lonely awake.
The night is taken from love, and love's guerdon
Is like and its burden.

To-night if I turn to my lover
I must ask: If she be? who am I?
To-night if her heart I uncover

No heart in the night I espy.
I am grips with the question of eld, and the sphinx holds fast
My eyes to the past.

Who am I, when I say I languish?
Who is she, if I call her mine?
And the fool's and the wise man's anguish
Are burnt in the bitter shrine.
The god is far as the stars, and the wine and fire
Salt with desire.
"Desunt cetera."

THE DANCE OF SHIVA.<<1>>

<<1. The MS. of this Hymn most mysteriously (for I am very careful)
disappeared two days after being written. I can remember no more of it that

the above; nor will inspiration return. -- A.C.>>

"Written at the House of Sri Parananda"
"Swami, Ceylon."

WITH feet set terribly dancing,
With eyelids filled of flame,
Wild lightnings from Him glancing,
Lord Shiva went and came.
The dancing of His feet was heard
And was the final word. {36A}

He danced the measure golden
On dead men ...
His Saints and Rishis<<1>> olden,
The yogins that ...
He trampled them to dust and they
Were sparks and no more clay.

<<1. The seven Rishis are the great Sages of India. They received from the
Gods the sacred Books.>>

The dust thrown up around Him
In cycles whirled and twined,
Dim sparks that fled and found Him
Like mist beyond the mind.
The universe was peopled then

With little gods, and men.

In that ecstatic whirling
He saw not nor ...

He knew not in his fervour
Creation's sated sigh;
The groan of the Preserver,
Life's miserable lie.
I broke that silence, and afraid
I knew not what I prayed

.

Let peace awaken for an hour
And manifest as power.

.

Cease not the dance unceasing,

The glance nor swerve nor cease,
Thy peace by power increasing
In me by power to peace.

"Desunt cetera."

SONNET FOR A PICTURE.

"Written in the woods above Kandy. Inscribed to T. Davidson."

LURED by the loud big-breasted courtesan
That plies trained lechery of obedient eyes,
He sits, holds bed's last slattern-sweet surprise,
Late plucked from gutter to grace groves of Pan. {36A}

The third one, ruddy as they twain are wan,
Hungriely gazes, sees her tower of lies
Blasted that instant in some wizard wise --
The frozen look -- the miserable man!

What sudden barb of what detested dart
Springs from Apollo's bowstring to his heart?
On sense-dulled ears what Voice rings the decree?
"For thee the women burn: the wine is cool:
For thee the fresco and the fruit -- thou fool!
This night thy soul shall be required of thee!"

THE HOUSE.

A NIGHTMARE.<<1>>

<<1. This, with slight variations, was one of the regular dreams of Allen Bennett Macgregor, just as the "flying" dream, the "naked in church" dream, the "taken in adultery" dream, the "lost tooth" dream, the "being shaved" dream, and many others of specific type recur from time to time in the life of most people. -- A.C.>>

"Written at Anurahapura."

I MUST be ready for my friend to-night.
So, such pale flowers as winter bears bedeck

The old oak walls: the wood-fire's cheerful light
Flashes upon the fire-dogs silver-bright.
Wood? why, the jetsam of yon broken wreck
Where the white sea runs o'er the sandy neck

That joins my island to the land when tides
Run low. What curious fancies through my brain
Run, all so wild and all so pleasant! Glides
No phantom creeping from the under sides
Of the grey globe: no avatar of pain
Gathering a body from the wind and rain. {37A}

So the night fell, and gently grew the shades
In firelight fancies taking idle form;
Often a flashing May-day ring of maids,
Or like an army through resounding glades
Glittering, with martial music, trumpet, shawm,
Drum -- so I build the echoes of the storm

Into a pageant of triumphant shapes.
So, as the night grows deeper, and no moon
Stirs the black heaven, no star its cloud escapes,
I sit and watch the fire: my musing drapes
My soul in darker dreams; the storm's wild tune
Rolls ever deeper in my shuddering swoon:

Whereat I start, shudder, and pull together
My mind. Why, surely it must be the hour!
My friend is coming through the wet wild weather

Across the moor's inhospitable heather
To the old stately tower -- my own dear tower.
He will not fail me for a sudden shower!

My friend! How often have I longed to see
Again his gallant figure and that face
Radiant -- how long ago we parted! -- we
The dearest friends that ever were! Ah me!
I curse even now that hateful parting-place.
But now -- he comes! How glad I am! Apace

Fly the glad minutes -- There he is at last!
I know the firm foot on the marble floor.
The hour-glass turns! What miseries to cast

For ever to the limbo of the past!
He knocks -- my friend! O joy for ever-more!
He calls! "Open the door! Open the door!" {37B}

You guess how gladly to the door I rushed
And flung it wide. Why! no one's there! Arouse!
I am asleep. What horror came and crushed
My whole soul's life out as some shadow brushed
My body and passed it? All sense allows
At last the fearful truth -- This is the house!

This is my old house on the marsh, and here,
Here is the terror of the distant sea
Moaning, and here the wind that wails, the drear
Groans like a ghost's, the desolate house of fear
Whence I fled once from my great enemy --
This is the house! O speechless misery!

Here the great silver candlesticks illumine
The aged book, the blackness blazoned o'er
With golden characters and scarlet bloom
Twined in the blue-tinged sigils wrought for doom,
And dreadful names of necromancer's lore
Written therein; so stood my room before

When the hissed whisper came, "Beware! Beware!
They're coming!" and "They're coming!" when the wind
Bore the blank echoes of their stealthy care
To creep up silently and find me there,
Hid in the windowless old house, stark blind

For fear -- and then -- what horrors lurked behind

The door firm barred! -- and thus they cried in vain:
"Open the door!" Then crouched I mad with fear
Till at the dawn their footsteps died again.
They can do nothing to me -- that is plain --
While the door bars them! What is it runs clear
Truth in my mind? Once more they may be near? {38A}

And then came memory. Wide the portal stood
And -- what had brushed me as it passed? What froze
My dream to this awakening -- fearful flood
Of horror loosed, loosing a sweat of blood,

An agony of terror on these brows?
God! God! Indeed, indeed this is the house!

The candles sputtered and went out. I stood
Fettered by fear, and heard the lonely wind
Lament across the marsh. A frenzied flood
Of hate and loathing swept across my mood,
And with a shudder I flung the door to. Mind
And body sank a huddled wreck behind.

Nought stirred. Draws hither the grim doom of Fate?

A long, long, while.

Now -- in the central core
Of my own room what accent of keen hate,
Triumphant malice, mockery satiate,
Rings in the voice above the storm's wild roar?
It cries "Open the door! Open the door!"

ANIMA LUNAE.

"Written partly under the great rock Sigiri, in
Ceylon, partly in Arabia, near Aden."

ZOHRA the king by feathered fans
Slept lightly through the mid-day heat.
Swart giants with drawn yataghans
Guard, standing at his head and feet,
Zohra, the mightiest of the khans!

Each slave Circassian like a moon
Sits smiling, burning with young bloom
Of dawn, and weaves an airy tune
Like a white bird's song bright and bold
That dips a fiery plume.
So the song lulled, lazily rolled
In tubes of silver, lutes of gold; {38B}
And all that palace drowsed away
The hours that fanned with silken fold
The progress of the Lord of Day.
Yet, as he slept, a grey

Shadow of dream drew near, and stooped
And glided through the ranks of slaves,
Leaving no shadow where they drooped,
No echo in the architraves
As silent as the grave's.
That shape vibrated to the tune
Of thought lulled low; the stirless swoon
Half felt its fellow gather close,
Yet stirred not: now the intruder moves,
Turns the tune slower to grave rows
Of palm trees, losing life in loves
Less turbid than the mildest dream
That ever stirred the stream
Whereon night floats, a shallop faint,
Ivory and silver bow and beam,
Dim-figured with the images
Divinely quaint
Of gold engraved, forth shadowing sorceries.
So the king dreamed of love: and passing on
The shape moved quicker, winnowing with faint fans
The soundless air of thought: the noonday sun
Seemed to the mightiest of a thousand khans
Like to a man's
Brief life -- a thousand such dream spans! --
And so he dreamed of life: and failing plumes
Wrought through ancestral looms
In the man's brain: and so he dreamed of death.
And slower still the grey God wrought
Dividing consciousness from breath,
And life and death from thought.
So the king dreamed of Nought.

Yet subtly-shapen was this Nothingness,
Not mere negation, as before that dream
Drew back the veil of sleep;
But strange: the king turned idly, sought to press
The bosom where love lately burnt supreme,
And found no ivory deep.
He turned and sought out life; and nothing lived: {39A}

Death, and nought died. The king's brow fell. Sore grieved
He rose, not knowing: and before his will
Swan's throat, dove's eyes, moon's breast, and woman's mouth,

And form desirable
Of all the clustered love drew back: grew still
"O turn, my lover, turn thee to the South!"
The girl's warm song of the Siesta's hour.
Heedless of all that flower,
Eager to feel the strong brown fingers close
On the unshrinking rose
And pluck it to his breast to perish there;
With neither thought nor care
Nor knowledge he went forth: none stay, none dare
Proffer a pavid prayer.

There was a pavement bright with emerald
Glittering on malachite
Clear to the Sun: low battlements enwalled
With gold the ground enthralled,
Sheer to the sight
Of sun and city: thither in his trance
The king's slow steps advance.
There stood he, and with eyes unfolded far
(Clouds shadowing a star
Or moonlight seen through trees -- so came the lashes
Over -- and strong sight flashes!)

Travelled in thought to life, and in its gleam
Saw but a doubtful dream.

His was a city crescent-shaped whose wall
Was brass and iron: in the thrall
Of the superb concave
Lay orbed a waveless wave.
Four moons of liquid light revolved and threw
Their silvery fountains forth, whose fruitful dew
Turned all the plain to one enamelled vale

Green as the serpent's glory, and -- how still!
-- To where the distant hill
Shaped like an Oread's breast arose beyond,
Across the starless pond {39B}
Silent and sleeping -- O the waters wan
That seem the soul of man! --
Suddenly darkness strikes the horizon round
With an abyss profound
That blots the half-moon ere the sun be set.
A mountain of pure jet

Rears its sheer bulk to heaven; and no snows
Tinge evening with rose.
No blaze of noon invades those rocks of night,
Nor moon's benignant might.
And looking downward he beheld his folk
Bound in no tyrant's yoke;
Knowing no God, nor fearing any man;
Life's enviable span
Free from disease and vice, sorrow and age.
Only death's joys assuage
A gathering gladness at the thought of sleep.
Never in all the archives, scroll on scroll,
Reaching from aeons wrote they "Women weep,
Men hate, the children suffer." In the place
Where men most walked a table of fine brass
Was set on marble, with an iron style
That all might carve within that golden space
If one grief came -- and still the people pass,
And since the city first began
None wrote one word thereon till one -- a man
Witty in spite of happiness -- wrote there:
"I grieve because the tablet is so fair
And still stands bare,
There being none to beautify the same
With the moon-curved Arabian character."
Whereat the king, "Thy grief itself removes
In its own cry its cause." And thence there came
Soft laughter that may hardly stir
The flowers that shake not in the City of Loves.
(For so men called the city's name
Because the people were more mild than doves,
More beautiful than Gods of wood or river;
And so the city should endure for ever.)

<<1. Mountain nymph.>>

But the king's mood was otherwise this day.
Along time's river, fifty years away,
There was a young man once
Ruddier than autumn suns {40A}
With gold hair curling like the spring sun's gold,
And blue eyes where stars lurked for happiness,
And lithe with all a young fawn's loveliness.

Such are the dwellers of the fire that fold
Fine wings in wanton ecstasy, and sleep
Where the thin tongues of glory leap
Up from the brazen hold
And far majestic keep
Of Djinn, the Lord of elemental light.
But he beheld some sight
Beyond that city's joy: his gentle word
The old king gently heard.
(This king was Zohra's father) "Lord and king
Of love's own city, give me leave to wing
A fervid flight to yonder hills of night.
Not that my soul is weary of the light
And lordship of thy presence; but in tender dream
I saw myself on the still stream
Where the lakes goes toward the mountain wall.
These little lives and loves ephemeral
Seemed in that dream still sweet; yet even now
I turned the shallop's prow
With gathering joy toward the lampless mountains.
I heard the four bright fountains
Gathering joy of music -- verily
I cannot understand
How this can be,
Yet -- I would travel to that land."
So all they kissed him -- and the boy was gone.
But when the full moon shone
A child cried out that he had seen that face
Limned with incomparable grace
Even in the shape of splendour as she passed.
The king's thought turned at last
To that forgotten story: and desire
Filled all his heart with aureate fire
Whose texture was a woman's hair; so fine
Bloomed the fair flower of pleasure:

Not the wild solar treasure
Of gleaming light, but the moon's shadowy pearl,
The love of a young girl {40B}
Before she knows that love: so mused the king;
"I am not weary of the soul of spring,"
He said, "none happier in this causeless chain
Of life that bears no fruit of pain,
No seed of sorrow," yet his heart was stirred,

And, wasting no weak word
On the invulnerable air, that had
No soul of memories sad,
He passed through all the palace: in his bowers
He stooped and kissed the flowers;
And in his hall of audience stayed awhile,
And with a glad strange smile
Bade a farewell to all those lords of his;
And greeted with a kiss
The virgins clustered in his halls of bliss.
Next, passing through the city, gave his hand
To many a joyous band
Flower-decked that wandered through the wanton ways
Through summer's idle days.
Last, passing through the city wall, he came
Out to the living flame
Of lambent water and the carven quay,
Stone, like embroidery!
All the dear beauty of art's soul sublime
He looked on the last time,
And trod the figured steps, and found the ledge
At the white water's edge
Where the king's pinnacle lodged; but he put by
That shell of ivory,
And chose a pearl-inwoven canoe, whose prow
Bore the moon's own bright brow
In grace of silver sculputred; and therein
He stepped; and all the water thin
Laughed to receive him; now the city faded
Little by little into many-shaded
Clusters of colour. So his boat was drawn
Subtly toward the dawn
With little labour; and the lake dropped down
From the orb's utter crown
O'er the horizon; and the narrowing sides
Showed him the moving tides {41A}

And pearling waters of a tinier stream
Than in a maiden's dream
She laves her silken limbs in, and is glad.
Then did indeed the fountains change their tune,
Sliding from gold sun-clad
to silver filigree wherethrough the moon
Shines -- for the subtle soul

Of music takes on shape, and we compare
The cedar's branching hair,
The comet's glory, and the woman's smile,
To strange devices otherwise not heard
Without the lute's own word.

So on the soul of Zohra grew
A fashioned orb of fiery dew;
Yet (as cool water on a leaf)
It touched his spirit not with grief,
Although its name was sorrow.
"O for a name to borrow"
(He mused) "some semblance for this subtle sense
Of new experience!
For on my heart, untouched, my mind not used
To any metre mused,
Save the one tranquil and continuous rhyme
Of joy exceeding time,
Here the joy changes, but abides for ever,
Here on the shining river
Where the dusk gathers, and tall trees begin
To wrap the shallop in,
Sweet shade not cast of sun or moon or star,
But of some light afar
Softer and sweeter than all these -- what light
Burns past the wondrous night
Of yonder crags? -- what riven chasm hides
In those mysterious sides?
Somewhere this stream must leap
Down vales divinely steep
Into some vain unprofitable deep!"

So mused the king. Mark you, the full moon shone!
Nay, but a little past the full, she rose
An hour past sunset: as some laughter gone,
After the bride's night, lost in subtler snows {41B}
Rosy with wifehood. Now the shallop glides

On gloomier shadier tides,
While the long hair of willows bent and kissed
The stream, and drew its mist
Up through their silent atmosphere.
Some sorrow drawing near
That slow, dark river would for sympathy

Have found its home and never wandered out
Into the sunlight any more. A sigh
Stirred the pale waters where the moonlight stood
Upon the sleepy flood
In certain bough-wrought shapes of mystic meaning,
As if the moon were weaning
The king her babe from milk of life and love
To milk new-dropped above
From her sweet breast in vaporous light
Into the willowy night
That lay upon the river. So the king
Heard a strange chant -- the woods began to sing;
The river took the tune; the willows kept
Time; and the black skies wept
Those tears, those blossoms, those pearl drops of milk
That the moon shed: and looking up he saw
As if the willows were but robes of silk,
The moon's face stoop and draw
Close to his forehead; at the tears she shed
He knew that he was dead!
Thus he feared not, nor wondered, as the stream
Grew darker, as a dream
Fades to the utter deep
Of dreamless sleep.
The stream grew darker, and the willows cover
(As lover from a lover
Even for love's sake all the wealth of love)
The whole light of the skies: there came to him
Sense of some being dim
Bent over him, one colour and one form
With the dark leaves; but warm
And capable of some diviner air.
Her limbs were bare, her face supremely fair, {42A}
Her soul one shapely splendour,
Her voice indeed as tender
As very silence: so he would not speak,
But let his being fade: that all the past
Grew shadowy and weak,

And lost its life at last,
Being mere dream to this that was indeed
Life: and some utter need
Of this one's love grew up in him: he knew
The spirit of that dew

In his own soul; and this indeed was love.
The faint girl bent above
With fixed eyes close upon him; oh! her face
Burned in the rapturous grace
Feeding on his; and subtly, without touch,
Grew as a flower that opens at the dawn
Their kiss: for touch of lips is death to love.
Even as the gentle plant one finger presses,
However soft the tress is
Of even the air's profane caresses,
It closes, all its joy of light withdrawn;
The sun feels sadness in his skies above,
Because one flower is folded. Thus they floated
Most deathlessly devoted
Beyond the trees, and where the hills divide
To take the nighted tide
Into a darker, deeper, greener breast,
Maybe to find -- what rest?
Now to those girdling mountains moon-exalted
Came through the hills deep-vaulted
That pearly shallop: there the rocks were rent,
And the pale element
Flowed idly in their gorges: there the night
Admits no beam of light;
Nor can the poet's eye
One ray espy.
Therefore I saw not how the voyage ended,
Only wherethrough those cliffs were rended
I saw them pass: and ever closer bent
The lady and the lover; ever slower
Moved the light craft, and lower
Murmured the waters and the wind complained;
And ever the moon waned;
Not wheeling round the world,
But subtly curved and curled {42B}
In shapes not seen of men, abiding ever
Above the lonely river
Aloft: no more I saw than this,
The shadowy bending to the first sweet kiss

That surely could not end, though earth should end.
Therefore my shut eyes blend
With sleep's own secret eyes and eyelashes,
Long and deep ecstasies,

Knowing as now I know -- at last -- how this
Foreshadows my own bliss
Of falling into death when life is tired.
For all things desired
Not one as death is so desirable,
Seeing all sorrows pass, all joys endure,
All lessons last. Not heaven and not hell
(My spirit is grown sure)
Await the lover
But death's veil draws, life's mother to discover,
Nature; no longer mother, but a bride!
Ay! there is none beside.

O brothers mightier than my mightiest word
In the least sob that stirred
Your lyres, bring me, me also to the end!
Be near to me, befriend
Me in the moonlit, moonless deeps of death,
And with exalted breath
Breathe some few flames into the embers dull
Of these poor rhymes and leave them beautiful.

"SABBE PI DUKKHAM."

("Everything is Sorrow.")

A LESSON FROM EURIPIDES.

"Written in Lamma Sayadaw Kyoung, Akyab."

LAUGHTER in the faces of the people
Running round the theatre of music
When the cunning actors play the Bacchae,
Greets the gay attire and gait of Pentheus,
Pentheus by his blasphemy deluded,
Pentheus caught already in the meshes
Of the fate that means to catch and crush him, {43A}
Pentheus going forth with dance and revel,
Soon by Bassarids (wild joys of Nature)

To be hunted. Ai! the body mangled
By the fatal fury of the Maenads
Let by Agave his maddened mother

(Nature's self). But this the people guess not,
Only see the youth in woman's raiment,
Feigned tresses drooping from his forehead,
Awkward with unwonted dress, rude waving
Aye the light spear tipped with mystic pine-cone;
Hear his boast who lifts the slender thyrsus:
"I could bear the mass of swart Cithaeron,
And themselves the Maenads on my shoulders."
So the self-willed's folly lights the laughter
Rippling round the theatre. But horror
Seizes on the heart of the judicious.
They see only madness and destruction
In the mockery's self innate, implicit.
Horror, deeper grief, most dreadful musings
Theirs who penetrate the poet's purpose!
So in all the passing joys of nature,
Joys of birth, and joys of life, in pleasures
Beautiful or innocent or stately,
May the wise discern the fact of being --
Change and death, the tragedy deep-lurking
Hidden in the laughter of the people,
So that laughter's self grows gross and hateful.
Then the noble Truth of Sorrow quickens
Every heart, and, seeking out its causes,
Still the one task of the wise, their wisdom
Finds desire, and, seeking out its medicine,
Finds cessation of desire, and, seeking
How so fierce a feat may be accomplished,
Finds at first in Truth a right foundation,
Builds the walls of Rightful Life upon it,
Four-square, Word and Act and Aspiration
Folded mystically across each other,
Crowns that palace of enduring marble
With sky-piercing pinnacles of Will-power
Rightly carven, rightly pointed; strengthens
[Mind sole centred on the single object]
All against the lightning, earthquake, thunder,
Meteor, cyclone with strong Meditation.
There, the scared spot from wind well-guarded,
May the lamp, the golden lamp, be lighted {43B}
To illumine the whole with final Rapture

And destroy the House of pain for ever,
Leave its laughter and its tears, and shatter

all the cause of its mockery, master
All the workings of its will, and vanish
Into peace and light and bliss, whose nature
Baffles so the little tongues of mortals
That we name it not, but from its threshold,
From the golden word upon its gateway,
Style "Cessation"; that whose self we guess not.
Thus the wise most mystically interpret
Into wisdom the worst folly spoken
By the mortal of a god deluded.
So, the last wise word rejected, Pentheus
Cries, "ag oos tachista, tou chronou de
soi pthonoo"<<1>> -- "Why waste we time in talking?
Let us now away unto the mountains!"
So the wise, enlightened by compassion,
Seeks that bliss for all the world of sorrow,
Swears the bitter oath of Vajrapani:
"Ere the cycle rush to utter darkness
Work I so that every living being
Pass beyond this constant chain of causes.
If I fail, may all my being shatter
Into millions of far-whirling pieces!"
Swears that oath, and works, and studies silence,
Takes his refuge in the triple jewel,
Strangles all desires in their beginning,
Leaves no egg of thought to hatch its serpent
Thrice detested for unnatural breeding --
Basilisk, to slay the maddened gazer.
Thus the wise man, for no glory-guerdon,
Hope of life or joy in earth or heaven,
Works, rejecting all the flowers of promise
Dew-lit that surround his path; but keepeth
Steady all his will to one endeavour,
Till the light, the might, the joy, the sorrow,
Life and death and love and hate are broken:
Work effaces work, avails the worker.
Strength, speed, ardour, courage and endurance
(Needed never more) depart for ever.
All dissolves, an unsubstantial phantom,
Ghost of morning seen before the sunrise,
Ghost of daylight seen beyond the sunset. {44A}
All hath past beyond the soul's delusion.

All hath changed to the ever changeless.

Name and form in nameless and in formless
Vanish, vanish and are lost for ever.

<<1. WEH NOTE: In the text, this is in Greek: alpha-gamma omega-sigma
tau-alpha-chi-iota-sigma-tau-alpha, tau-omicron-epsilon chi-rho-omicron-
nu-omicron-epsilon delta-epsilon sigma-omicron-iota phi-theta-omicron-nu-
omega>>

DHAMMAPADA.<<1>>

<<1. An attempt to translate this noblest of the Buddhist books into the
original metres. The task soon tired. -- A.C.>>

I.

ANTITHESES. (THE TWINS.)

ALL that we are from mind results, on mind is founded, built of mind.
Who acts or speaks with evil thought, him doth pain follow sure and
blind:<<1>>
So the ox plants his foot and so the car-wheel follows hard behind.

<<1. Blind, "i.e.," operated by law, not by caprice of a deity.>>

All that we are from mind results, on mind is founded, built of mind.
Who acts or speaks with righteous thought, him happiness doth surely find.
So failing not, the shadow falls for ever in its place assigned.

"Me he abused and me he beat, he robbed me, he defeated me."
In whom such thought find harbourage hatred will never cease to be.

"Me he abused and me he beat, he robbed me, he defeated me."
In whom such thoughts no harbourage may find, will hatred cease to be.

"The state of hate doth not abate by hate in any clime or time,
But hate will cease if love increase,"<<1>> so soothly runs the ancient
rhyme. {44B}

<<1. Crowley has imitated the punning of the Pali by the repeated rhymes,
which further gives the flavour of the Old English proverbial saw.>>

The truth that "here we all must die" those others do not comprehend;

But some perceiving it, for them all discords find an utter end.

Sodden<<1>> with passion, unrestrained his senses (such an one we see),
Immoderate in the food of sense, idle and void of energy:
Him surely Mara<<2>> overcomes, as wind throws down the feeble tree.

<<1. Sodden -- the habitual -- who "lives" unrestrained, etc.>>
<<2. The Indian power of evil.>>

Careless of passion, well restrained his senses, such an one we find
Moderate in pleasure, faithful, great in mighty energy of mind:
Him Mara shakes not; are the hills thrown down by fury of the wind?

He, void of temperance, and truth, from guilt, impurity, and sin
Not free, the poor and golden robe he hath no worth to clothe therein.
<<1>>

<<1. Alternative reading! --
Who is not free from dirty taint, and temperate and truthful ain't,
He should not wear the garment quaint that marks the Arahat or Saint. --
A.C.>>

Regarding temperance and truth, from guilt, impurity, and sin
Freed, he the poor and golden robe indeed hath worth to clothe therein.

They who see falsehood in the Truth, imagine Truth to lurk in lies,
Never arrive to know the Truth, but follow eager vanities.

To whom in Truth the Truth is known, Falsehood in Falsehood doth appear,
To them the Path of Truth is shown; right aspirations are their sphere!
{45A}

An ill-thatched house is open to the mercy of the rain and wind.
So passion hath the power to break into an unreflecting mind.

A well-thatched house is proof against the fury of the rain and wind.
So passion hath no power to break into a rightly-ordered mind.

Here and hereafter doth he mourn, him suffering doth doubly irk,
Who doeth evil, seeing now at last how evil was his work.

The virtuous many rejoices here, hereafter doth he take delight,
Both ways rejoices, both delights, as seeing that his work was right.

Here and hereafter suffers he: the pains of shame his bosom fill
Who thinks "I did the wrong," laments his going on the Path of Ill.

Here and hereafter hath he joy: in both the joy of rectitude
Who thinks "I did the right" and goes rejoicing on the Path of Good.

A-many verses though he can recite of Law, the idle man who doth it not
Is like an herd who numbereth cows of others, Priesthood him allows nor
part nor lot.

Who little of the Law can cite, yet knows and walks therein aright, and
shuns the snare
Of passion, folly, hate entwined: Right Effort liberates his mind, he doth
not care
For this course done or that to run: surely in Priesthood such an one hath
earned a share. {45B}

II.

EARNESTNESS.

Amata's<<1>> path is Earnestness, Dispersion Death's disciples tread:
The earnest never die, the vain are even as already dead.

<<1. Sanskrit, Amrita, the "Elixir of Life" and food of the gods.>>

Who understand, have travelled far on concentration's path, delight
In concentration, have their joy, knowing the Noble Ones aright.

In meditation firmly fixed, by constant strenuous effort high,
They to Nibbana<<1>> come at last, the incomparable security.

<<1. Sanskrit, Nirvana. See Childers' Pali Dictionary for etymological
discussion. The signification is too difficult a question to settle offhand in a
note.>>

Whose mind is strenuous and reflects; whose deeds are circumspect and
pure,
His thoughts aye fixed on Law, the fame of that centred shall endure.

By Earnestness, by centred thought, by self-restraint, by suffering long,
Let the wise man an island build against the fatal current strong.

Fools follow after vanity, those men of evil wisdom's sect;
But the wise man doth earnestness, a precious talisman, protect.

Follow not vanity, nor seek the transient pleasures of the sense:
The earnest one who meditates derives the highest rapture thence.

When the wise man by Earnestness hath Vanity to chaos hurled
He mounts to wisdom's palace, looks serene upon the sorrowing world.
{46A}

Mighty is wisdom: as a man climbs high upon the hills ice-crowned,
Surveys, aloof, the toiling folk far distant on the dusty ground.

Among the sleepers vigilant, among the thoughtless eager-eyed
The wise speeds on; the racer so passes the hack with vigorous stride.

By earnestness did Maghava<<1>> attain of Gods to be the Lord.
Praise is one-pointed thought's reward; Dispersion is a thing abhorred.

<<1. Indra, the Indian Zeus.>>

The Bhikkhu who in Earnestness delights, who fears dispersions dire,
His fetters all, both great and small, burning he moves about the fire.

The Bhikkhu who in Earnestness delights, Dispersion sees with fear,
He goes not to Destruction; he unto Nibbana draweth near.

III.

THE ARROW.

Just as the fletcher shapes his shaft straightly, so shapes his thought
the saint,
For that is trembling, weak, impatient of direction or restraint.

Mara's dominion to escape if thought impetuously tries
Like to a fish from water snatched thrown on the ground it trembling lies.

Where'er it listeth runneth thought, the tameless trembling consciousness.
Well is it to restrain: -- a mind so stilled and tamed brings happiness.

Hard to perceive, all-wandering, subtle and eager do they press,
Thoughts; let the wise man guard his thoughts; well guarded thoughts bring
happiness. {46B}

Moving alone, far-travelling, bodiless, hidden i'th' heart, who trains
His thought and binds it by his will shall be released from Mara's chains.

Who stills not thought, nor knows true laws; in whom distraction is not
dumb,
Troubling his peace of mind; he shall to perfect knowledge never come.

His thoughts centred, unperplexed his mind renouncing good and ill.
Alike, for him there is no fear if only he be watchful still.

Knowing this body to be frail, making this thought a fortalice, do thou
aright
Mara with wisdom's shaft assail! Watch him when conquered. Never cease
thou from the fight.

Alas! ere long a useless log, this body on the earth will lie.
Contemned of all, and void of sense and understanding's unity.

What foe may wreak on fie, or hate work on the hated from the hater,
Surely an ill directed mind on us will do a mischief greater.

Father and mother, kith and kin, of these can none do service kind
So great to us, as to ourselves the good direction of the mind.

IV.

FLOWERS.

O who shall overcome this earth, the world of God's and Yama's<<1>>
power!

Who find the well taught Path as skill of herbist finds the proper flower?
{47A}

<<1. Hades plus Minos; he both rules and judges the dead, according to
Hindu mythology.>>

The seeker shall subdue this earth, the world of God's and Yama's power;
The seeker find that Path as skill of herbist finds the proper flower.

Like unto foam this body whoso sees, its mirage-nature comprehends aright,
Breaking dread Mara's flower-pointed shaft he goes, Death's monarch shall
not meet his sight.

Like one who strayeth gathering flowers, is he who Pleasure lusteth on;
As the flood whelms the sleeping village, so Death snaps him -- he is
gone.

Like one who strayeth gathering flowers is he whose thoughts to Pleasure
cling;
While yet unsatisfied with lusts, there conquereth him the Iron King.

As the bee gathers nectar, hurts not the flower's colour, its sweet smell
In no wise injureth, so let the Sage within his hamlet dwell.

To others' failures, others' sins done or good deeds undone let swerve
Never the thought; thine own misdeeds, omissions, -- these alone observe.

Like to a lovely flower of hue bright, that hath yet no odour sweet
So are his words who speaketh well, fruitless, by action incomplete.

Like to a lovely flower of hue delightful and of odour sweet
So are his words who speaketh well, fruitful, by action made complete.

As from a heap of flowers can men make many garlands, so, once born,
A man a-many noble deeds by doing may his life adorn. {47B}

Travels the scent of flowers against the wind? Not Sandal, Taggara, nor
Jasmine scent!
But the odour of the good doth so, the good pervadeth unto every element.

When Sandal, Lotus, Taggara and Vassiki their odour rare
Shed forth, their fragrant excellence is verily beyond compare.

Yet little is this fragrance found of Taggara and Sandal wood:
Mounts to the Gods, the highest, the scent of those whose deeds are right
and good.

Perfect in virtue, living lives of Earnestness, Right Knowledge hath
Brought into liberty their minds, that Mara findeth not their path.

As on a heap of rubbish thrown by the wayside the Lotus flower

Will bloom sweet scented, delicate and excellent to think upon;
So 'mid the slothful worthless ones, the Walkers in Delusion's power,
In glory of Wisdom, light of Buddh forth hath the True Disciple shone.

"Desunt cetera."<<1>>

<<1. The reader will kindly note such important changes of metre as occur in the two last verses of "The Twins" and elsewhere. The careless might suppose that these do not scan; they do, following directly or by analogy a similar change in the Pali.>>

ST. PATRICK'S DAY, 1902.

"Written at Delhi."

O GOOD St. Patrick, turn again
Thy mild eyes to the Western main!
Shalt thou be silent? thou forget?
Are there no snakes in Ireland yet?

"Death to the Saxon! Slay nor spare!"
"O God of Justice, hear us swear!" {48A}

The iron Saxon's bloody hand
Metes out his murder on the land.
The light of Erin is forlorn.
The country fades: the people mourn.

Of land bereft, of right beguiled,
Starved, tortured, murdered, or exiled;
Of freedom robbed, of faith cajoled,
In secret councils bought and sold!

Their weapons are the cell, the law,
The gallows, and the scourge, to awe
Brave Irish hearts: their hates deny
The right to live -- the right to die.

Our weapons -- be they fire and cord,
The shell, the rifle, and the sword!
Without a helper or a friend
All means be righteous to the End!

Look not for help to wordy strife!
This battle is for death or life.
Melt mountains with a word -- and then
The colder hearts of Englishmen!

Look not to Europe in your need!
Columbia's but a broken reed!
Your own good hearts, your own strong hand
Win back at last the Irish land.

Won by the strength of cold despair
Our chance is near us -- slay nor spare!
Open to fate the Saxons lie: --
Up! Ireland! ere the good hour fly!

Stand all our fortunes on one cast!
Arise! the hour is come at last.
One torch may fire the ungodly shrine --
O God! and may that torch be mine!

But, even when victory is assured,
Forget not all ye have endured!
Of native mercy dam the dyke,
And leave the snake no fang to strike!

They slew our women: let us then
At least annihilate their men!
Lest the ill race from faithless graves
Arise again to make us slaves. {48B}

Arise, O God, and stand, and smite
For Ireland's wrong, for Ireland's right!
Our Lady, stay the pitying tear!
There is no room for pity here!

What pity knew the Saxon e'er?
Arise, O God, and slay nor spare,
Until full vengeance rightly wrought
Bring all their house of wrong to nought!

Scorn, the catastrophe of crime,
these be their monuments through time!

And Ireland, green once more and fresh,
Draw life from their dissolving flesh!

By Saxon carcasses renewed,
Spring up, O shamrock virgin-hued!
And in the glory of thy leaf

Let all forget the ancient grief!

Now is the hour! The drink is poured!
Wake! fatal and avenging sword!
Brave men of Erin, hand in hand,
Arise and free the lovely land!

"Death to the Saxon! Slay nor spare!"
"O God of Justice, hear us swear!" {48A}

THE EARL'S QUEST.

"Written at Camp Despair, 20,000 ft., Chogo
Ri Lungma, Baltistan."

SO now the Earl was well a-weary of
The grievous folly of this wandering.
Had he been able to have counted Love

Or Power, or Knowledge as the sole strong thing
Fit to suffice his quest, his eyes had gleamed
With the success already grasped. The sting

Of all he suffered, was that he esteemed
His quest partook of all and yet of none.
So as he rode the woodlands out there beamed {49A}

The dull large spectre of a grim flat sun,
Red and obscure upon the leaden haze
That lapped and wrapped and rode the horizon.

The Earl rode steadily on. A crest caught rays
Of that abominable sunset, sharp
With needles of young pines, their tips ablaze.

Their feet dead black; the wind's dark fingers warp

To its own time their strings, a sombre mode
Found by a ghost on a forgotten harp

Or (Still more terrible!) the lost dread ode
That used to all the dead knights to their chief
To the lone waters from the shadowy road.

So deemed the weary Earl of the wind's grief,
And seemed to see about him form by form
Like mighty wrecks, wave-shattered on a reef,

Moulded and mastered by the shapeless storm
A thousand figures of himself the mist
Enlarged, distorted: yet without a qualm

(So sad was he) he mounted the last twist
Of the path's hate, and faced the wind, and saw
The lead gleam to a surly amethyst

As the sun dipped, and Night put forth a paw
Like a black panther's, and efface the East.
Then, with a sudden inward catch of awe

As if behind him sprang some silent beast,
So shuddered he, and spurred his horse, and found
A black path towards the water; he released

The bridle; so the way went steep, ill bound
On an accursed task, so dark it loomed
Amid its yews and cypresses, each mound {49B}

About each root, a grave, where Hell entombed
A vampire till the night broke sepulchre
And all its phantoms desperate and doomed

Began to gather flesh, to breathe, to stir.
Such was the path, yet hard should find the work
Glamour, to weave her web of gossamer

Over such eyesight as the Earl's for murk.
He had watched for larvae by the midnight roads,
The stake-transpierced corpse, the caves where lurk

The demon spiders, and the shapeless toads
Fed by their lovers duly on the draught
That bloats and blisters, blackens and corrodes.

These had he seed of old; so now he laughed,
Not without bitterness deep-lying, that erst
He had esteemed such foolish devil's craft

Part of his quest, his quest when fair and first
He flung the last, the strongest horsemen back
With such a buffet that no skill amerced

Its debt but headlong in his charger's track
He must be hurled, rib-shattered by the shock;
And the loud populace exclaimed "Alack!",

Their favourite foiled. But oh! the royal stock
Of holy kings from Christ to Charlemagne
Hailed him, anointed him, fair lock by lock,

With oil that drew incalculable gain
From those six olives in the midst whereof
Christ prayed the last time, ere the fatal Wain<<1>>

<<1. Charles' Wain -- Ursa Maor. There is a silly legend to this effect.>>

Stood in the sky reversed, and utmost Love
Entered the sadness of Gethsemane.
So did the king; so did the priest above {50A}

Place his old hands upon the Earl's, decree
The splendid and the solemn accolade
That he should go forth to the world and be

Knight-errant; so did then the fairest maid
Of all that noble company keep hid
The love that melted her; she took the blade

Blessed by a mage, who slew the harmless kid
With solemn rite and water poured athwart
In stars and sigils, -- fire leapt out amid,

And blazed upon the blade; and stark cold swart

Demons came hurtling to enforce the spell,
Until the exorcism duly wrought

Fixed in the living steel so terrible
A force nor man nor devil might assail,
Nay -- might approach the wary warrior well,

So long as he was clothed in silver mail
Of purity, and iron-helmeted

With ignorance of fear: so through the hail

Of flowers, of cries, of looks, of white and red,
Fear, hatred, envy, love -- nay, self-conceit
Of girls that preened itself and masqued instead

Of love -- he rode with head deep bowed -- too sweet,
Too solemn at that moment to respond,
Or even to lift his evening eyes to greet

The one he knew was nearest -- too, too fond!
He dared not -- not for his sake but for hers.
So he bent down, and passed away beyond

In space, in time. [The myriad ministers
Of God, seeing her soul, prayed God to send
One spirit yet to turn him -- subtly stirs

The eternal gory of god's mouth; "The end
Is not, nor the beginning." Such the speech
Our language fashions down -- to comprehend.] {50B}

The wood broke suddenly upon the beach,
Curved, flat; the water oozing on the sand
Stretched waveless out beyond where eye might reach,

A grey and shapeless place, a hopeless land!
Yet in that vast, that weary sad expanse
The Earl saw three strange objects on the strand

His keen eye noted at the firstborn glance,
And recognised as pointers for his soul;
So that his soul was fervid in the dance,

Knowing itself one step more near the goal,
Should he but make the perfect choice of these.
Farthest, loose tethered, at a stake's control,

A shallop rocked before the sullen breeze.
Midway, a hermit's hut stood solitary,
A dim light set therein. Near and at ease

A jolly well-lit inn -- no phantom airy!
Solid and warm, short snatches of light song

Issuing cheery now and then. "Be wary!"

Quoth the wise Earl, "I wander very long
Far from my quest, assuredly to fall
Sideways each step towards the House of Wrong,

"Were but one choice demented. Choice is small
Here though. (A flash of insight in his mind)
Which of these three gets answer to its call?

"Yon shallop? -- leave to Galahad! Resigned
Yon hermit to be welcome Lancelot!
For me -- the inn -- what fate am I to find?

"Who cares? Shall I seek ever -- do ye wot? --
But in the outre, the obscure, the occult?
My Master is of might to lift me what {51A}

"Hangs, veil of glamour, on my 'Quisque vult,'
The morion's motto: to exhaust the cross,
Bidding it glow with roses -- the result

"What way he will: may be adventure's loss
is gain to common sense; whereby I guess
Wise men have hidden Mount Biagenos<<1>>

<<1. The mystic mountain of the Rosicrucians.>>

"And all its height from fools who looked no less
For snows to lurk beneath the roots of yew,
Or in the caverns grim with gloominess

"Hid deep i' the forests they would wander through,

Instead of travelling the straightforward road.
I call them fools -- well, I have been one too.

"Now then at least for the secure abode
And way of luck -- knight-errantry once doffed,
The ox set kicking at his self-set goad,

"Here's for the hostel and the light aloft!
Roderic, my lad! there's pelf to pay the score
For ale and cakes and venison and a soft

"Bed we have missed this three months -- now no more
Of folly! Avaunt, old Merlin's nonsense lore!
Ho there! Travellers! Mine host! Open the door!"

"Desunt cetera."

In the second part -- joyous inn fireside -- the Earl refuses power,
knowledge, and love (offered him by a guest) by the symbolic drink of ale
and the cherry cheeks of the maid.

In part three she, coming secretly to him, warns him he must destroy the
three vices, faith, hope, and charity. This he does easily, save the love of the
figure of the Crucified; but at last conquering this, he attains. [These were
never written.] {51B}

EVE.

"Written in the Mosque of Omar."

HERS was the first sufficient sacrifice
That won us freedom, hers the generous gift
That turned herself upon the curse adrift
Sailless and rudderless, to pay the price
Of permanence with pain, of love with vice,
Like a tall ship swan-lovely, swallow-swift,
That makes upon the breakers. So the rift
Sprang and the flame roared. Farewell, Paradise!

How shall a man that is a man reward
Her priceless sacrifice, rebuke the Lord?
Why, there's Convention's corral; ring her round!
Here's shame's barbed wire; push out the unclean thing!

Here's freedom's falconry; quick, clip her wing!
There, labour's danger -- thrust her underground!

THE SIBYL.

CROUCHED o'er the tripod the pale priestess moans
Ambiguous destiny, divided fate.
Sibylline oracles of woe create
Roars as of beasts, majestic monotones
Of wind, strong cries of elemental thrones,
All sounds of mystery of the Pythian state!

O woman without change or joy or date
I await thy oracle as the Delphian stone's!

"Desunt cetera."

LA COUREUSE.

"Written in the Quartier Latin, Paris."

A FADED skirt, a silken petticoat,
A little jacket, a small shapely shoe,
A toque. A symphony in gray and blue,
The child ripples, the conquering masternote {52A}

Subtlety. Faint, stray showers of twilight float
In shadows round the well-poised head; dark, true,
Joyous the eyes laugh -- and are weeping too,
For all the victory of her royal throat.

She showed her purse with tantalising grace:
Some sous, a franc, a key, some stuff, soft grey.
The mocking laughter trills upon her tongue:
"There's all my fortune." "And your pretty face!
What do you do?" Wearily, "I am gay."
"What do you hope for?" Simply, "To die young."

SONNET FOR A PICTURE.<<1>>

<<1. A parody on his own appreciations of Rodin's sculpture.>>

"GR:pi-omicron-iota-kappa-iota-lambda-omicron-theta-rho-omicron-nu',
alpha-theta-alpha-nu-alpha-tau' 'Alpha-phi-rho-omicron-delta-iota-tau-
alpha."

Sigma-alpha-pi-phi-omega.

---We have seen
Gold tarnished, and the gray above---"
-- SWINBURNE.

AS some lone mountebank of the stage may tweak
The noses of his fellows, so Gavin<<1>>
Tweaks with her brush-work the absurd obscene

Academicians. How her pictures speak!
Chiaroscuro Rembrandtesque, form Greek!
What values! What a composition clean!
Breadth shaming broadness! Manner epicine!
Texture superb! Magnificent technique!

<<1. An art student in Paris at this time.>>

Raphael, Velasquez, Michael Angelo,
Stare, gape, and splutter when they see thy colour,
Reds killing roses, greens blaspheming grass.
O thou art simply perfect, don't you know?
Than thee all masters of old time are duller,
O artiste of the Quartier Montparnasse! {52B}

TO "ELIZABETH."

WITH A COPY OF TANNHAUSER.

"Written in the Akasa."<<1>>

<<1. Space or Ether. The Hindus say that all actions, especially important
("i.e." spiritual) ones, are written therein. It is an Automatic Recording
Angel.>>

THE story of a fool. From love and death
Emancipate, he stand above. The goal
Is in the shrines of misty air: there roll
The voices and the songs of One who saith:

"There is no peace for him who lingereth."
Love is a cinder now that was a coal:
Either were vain. The great magician's soul
Is far too weak to risk Elizabeth.

All this is past and under me. Above,
Around, the magian tree of knowledge waves
its rosy flowers and golden fruit. I know
Indeed that he is caught therein who craves;
But I, desiring not, accept the glow
And blossom of that Knowledge that is Love.

RONDELS (AT MONTE CARLO).

"Written in the Casino, Monte Carlo."

I.
THERE is no hell but earth: O coil of fate
Binding us surely in the Halls of Birth,
The unsubstantial, the dissolving state!
There is no hell but earth.

Vain are the falsehoods that subserve to mirth.
Dust is to dust, create or uncreate.
The wheel is bounded by the world's great girth.

By prayer and penance unregenerate,
Redeemed by no man's sacrifice or worth,
We swing: no mortal knows his ultimate.
There is no hell but earth.

II.
In all the skies the planets and the stars
Receive us, where our fate in order plies.
Somewhere we live between the savage bars
In all the skies. {53A}

Let God's highest heaven receive the man who dies --
All hath an end: he falls: the stains and scars
Are his throughout unwatched eternities.

The roses and the scented nenuphars

Give hope -- oh! monolith! oh house of lies!
We change and change and fade, strange avatars
In all the skies.

III.

One way sets free. That way is not to tread
Through fire or earth or spirit, air or sea.
That secret is not gathered of the dead.
On way sets free.

"Not to desire" shall lead to "not to be."
There is no hope within, none overhead,
None by the chance of fate's august decree.

It is a path where tears are ever shed.

There is no joy -- is that a path for me?
Yea! though I track the ways of utmost dread,
One way sets free.

IN THE GREAT PYRAMID OF
GHIZEH.<<1>>

<<1. If this poem be repeatedly read through, it falls into a subtly rhymed
and metrical form.>>

I SAW in a trance or a vision the web of the ages unfurled, flung wide with a
scream of derision, a mockery mute of the world. As it spread over sky I
mapped it fair on a sheet of blue air with a hurricane pen. I copy it here for
men. First on the ghostly adytum of pale mist that was the abyss of time
and space (the stars all blotted out, poor faded nenuphars on the storm-sea
of the infinite:) I wist a shapeless figure arise and cover all, its cloak an
ancient pall, vaster and older than the skies of night, and blacker than all
broken years -- aye! but it grew and held me in its grasp so that {53B} I felt
its flesh, not clean sweet flesh of man but leprous white, and crawling with
innumerable tears like worms, and pains like a sword-severed asp,
twitching, and loathlier than all mesh of hates and lusts, defiling; nor any
voice it had, nor any motion, it was infinite in its own world of horror,
irredeemably bad as everywhere sunlit, being this world, forget not! being
this world, this universe, the sum of all existence; so that opposing fierce
resistance to the all-law, stood loves and joys, delicate girls, and beautiful
strong boys, and bearded men like gods, and golden things, and bright
desires with wings, all beauties, and all truths of life poets have ever prized.

So showed the microscope, this aged strife between all forms; but seen afar, seen well drawn in a focus, synthesised, the whole was sorrow and despair; agony biting through the fair; meanness, contemptibility, enthroned; all proposeless, all unatoned; all putrid of an hope, all vacant of a soul. I called upon its master, as who should call on God. Instead, arose a shining form, sweet as a whisper of soft air kissing the brows of a great storm; his face with light was molten, musical with waves of his delight moving across: his countenance utterly fair! then was my philosophic vision shamed: conjecture at a loss; and my whole mind revolted; then I blamed the vision as a lie; yet bid that vision speak how he was named, being so wonderfully desirable. Whereat he smiled upon me merrily, answering that whoso named him well, being a poet, called him Love; or else being a lover of wisdom, called him Force; or being a cynic, called him Lust; or being a pietist, called him God. The last -- thou seest! -- (he said), a lie of Hell's, and all a partial course of the great circle of whirling dust (stirred by the iron rod of thought) that men call wisdom. So I looked deep in his beauty, and beheld its truth. The life of that fair youth was a a whiz of violent little whirls, helical coils of emptiness, grey curls of misty and impalpable stuff, torn, crooked, all ways {54A} and none at once, but ever pressed in idiot circles; and one thing he lacked, now I looked from afar again, was rest. Thence I withdrew my sight, the eyeballs cracked with stain of my endeavour, and my will struck up with subtler skill than any man's that in fair Crete tracked through the labyrinth of Minos, and awoke the cry to call his master; grew a monster whirlwind of revolving smoke and then, mere nothing. But in me arose a peace profounder than Himalayan snows cooped in their crystalline ravines. I saw the ultimatum of the one wise law. I stood in the King's Chamber, by the tomb of slain Osiris, in the Pyramid and looked down the Great Gallery, deep, deep into the hollow of earth; grand gloom burned royally therein; I was well hid in the shadow; here I realised myself to be in that sepulchral sleep wherein were mirrored all these things of mystery. So the long passage steeply sliding ever up to my feet where I stood in the emptiness; at last a sure abiding only in absolute ceasing of all sense, and all perceived or understood or knowable; thus, purple and intense, I beheld the past that leads to peace, from royal heights of mastery to sleep, from self-control imperial to an end, therefore I shaped the seven tiers of the ascending corridor into seven strokes of wisdom, seven harvests fair to reap from seven bitter sowings.<> Here ascend the armies of life's universal war chasing the pious pilgrim. First, his sight grew adamant, sun-bright, so that he saw aright. Second, his heart was noble, that he would live ever unto good. Third, in his speech stood tokens of this will, so pitiful and pure he spake, nor ever from him brake woe-winged words, nor slaver of the snake. Fourth, in each noble act of life he taught crystalline vigour of thought, so in each deed he was aright; well-wrought all the man's work; and fifth, this hero strife grew one with his whole life, so harmonised to the one after-end his every {54B} conscious

and unconscious strain, his peace and pleasure and pain, his reflex life, his deepest-seated deed of mere brute muscle and nerve! Thence, by great Will new-freed, the ardent life leaps, sixth, to Effort's tower, invoking the occult, the secret power, found in the void when all but Will is lost; so, seventh, he bends it from its bodily station into the great abyss of Meditation, whence the firm level is at last his own and Rapture's royal throne is more than throne, sarcophagus! an end! an end! Resounds the echo in the stone, incalculable myriads of tons poised in gigantic balance overhead, about, beneath. O blend your voices, angels of the awful earth! dogs! demons leaping into hideous birth from the imprisoned deserts of the Nile! And thou, O habitant most dread, disastrous crocodile, hear thou the Law, and live, and win to peace!

THE HILLS.

TO OSCAR ECKENSTEIN.

WHENCE the black lands shudder and darken,
Whence the sea birds have empire to range,
Whence the moon and the meteor hearken
The perpetual rhythm of change,
On earth and in heaven deluded
With time, that the soul of us kills,
I have passed. I have brooded, fled far to the wooded
And desolate hills.

Not there is the changing of voices
That lament or regret or are sad,
But the sun in his strength rejoices,
The moon in her beauty is glad.
As timeless and deathless time passes,
And death is a hermit that dwells
By the imminent masses of ice, where the grasses
Abandon the fells. {55A}

There silence, arrayed as a spectre,
Is visible, tangible, near,
To the cup of the man pours nectar,
To the heart of the coward is fear:
Though the desolate waste be enchanted
By a spell that bewilders and chills,
To me it is granted to worship the haunted

Delight of the hills.

To me all the blossoms are seedless,
Yet big with all manner of fruit:
And a voice in the waste is needless
Since my soul in its splendour is mute.
Though the height of the hill be deserted,
The soul of a man has its mate;
With the wide sky skirted his heart is reverted
To commune with Fate.

Far flings out the spur to the sunset;
Its help to the hope of the sun
That all be unfolded if one set,
That none be apart from the One;
And the sweep of the wings of the weather,
Marked bright with the silvery ghylls

For flickering feather, brings all things together
To nest in the hills.

Like a great bird poised in the aether,
The mountain keeps watch over earth,
On the child that lies sleeping beneath her
Wild-eyed from a terrible birth.
But by noise of the world unshaken,
By dance of the world not bedinned,
The hill bides forsaken, yet only to waken
Her lover, the wind.

Like a lion asleep in his fastness,
Or a warrior leant on his spear,
The hill stands up in the vastness,
And the stars grow strangely near;
For the secret of life and its gladness
Are hidden in strength that distils
A potion of madness from berries of sadness
Grown wild in the hills. {55B}

Though the earth be disparted and rended,
Thus only the great peaks change
That their image is moulded and blended
Into all that a fancy may range;
And the silence my song could refigure

To the note of a bird did I will,
Of glory or rigour, of passion or vigour --
The change were to ill!

For silence is better than singing
Though a Shelley wove songs in the sky,
And hovering is sweeter than winging;
To live is less good than to die.
The secret of secrets is hidden
Not in the lives nor in loves, but in wills
That are free and unchildden, that wander unbidden
To home in the hills.

A strength that is more than the summer
Is firm in that silence and rest,
Though stiller the rocks be and dumber
That the soul of its slumber oppressed.
For stronger control is than urging,

And mightier the heart of the sea
Than her waves deep-merging and striving and surging
That deem they are free.

In spirit I stand on the mountain,
My soul into God's withdrawn
And look to the East like a fountain
That shoots up the spray of the dawn.
And the life of the mountain swims through me
(So the song of a thrush in me thrills)
And the dawn speaks to me, of old for it knew me
The soul of the hills.

I stand on the mountain in wonder
As the splendour springs up in the East,
As the cloud banks are rended asunder,
And the wings of the Night are released.
As in travail a maiden demented,
Afraid of the deed she hath done,
By no man lamented, springs up the sweet-scented
Pale flower of the sun. {56A}

So change not the heights and the hollows;
The hollows are one with the heights
In that pallid grave dawn of Apollo's

Confusion of shadows and lights.
Unreal save to sense that can sense her
That maiden of sunrise refills
The air's grey censer with perfumes intenser
The higher the hills.

So, vague as a ghost swift faded,
Steals dawn, and so sunset may see
How her long long locks deep-braided
Fall down to her breast and her knee.
So night and so sunrise discover
No light and no darkness to heed.
Night is above her, and brings her no lover;
And day, but no deed.

Such a sense is up and within me,
A tongue as of mystical fire!
Love, beauty, and holiness win me
To the end of the great desire,

Where I cease from the thirst and the labour,
As the land that no ploughman tills
Lest the robber his neighbour unloosen the sabre
From holds in the hills.

From love of my life and its burden
Set free in the silence remote,
Grows a sorrow divine for my guerdon,
A peace in my struggling note.
Compassion for earth far extended
Beneath me, the swords and the rods,
My spirit hath bended, bowed me and blended
My self into God's.

But God -- what divinity rises
To me in the mountainous place?
What sun beyond suns, and surprises
Mine eyes at the dawn of His face?
No God in this silence existing,
No heaven and no earth of Him skills,
Save the blizzards unresting, whirling and twisting
Adrift on the hills. {56B}

So witless and aimless and formless

I count the Creator to be;
Not strong as who rides on the stormless
And tames the untamable sea.
But motion and action distorted
Are marks of the paths He hath trod.
Hated or courted, aided or thwarted: --
Lo, He is your God!

But mine in the silence abideth;
Her strength is the strength of rest;
Not on thunders or clouds She rideth
But draweth me down to Her breast:
No maker of men, but dissolving
Their life from its burden of ills,
Ever resolving the circle revolving
To peace of the hills.

And dark is Her breast and unlighted;
But a warm sweet scent is expressed,
And a rose as of sunset excited

In the strength of Her sunless breast.
Her love is like pain, but enchanted:
Her kiss is an opiate breath
Amorously panted: her fervours last granted
Are sorrow, and death. {57A}

Nor death as ye name in derision
The change to a cycle of pain,
To a cycle of joy as a vision
Ye chase, and may capture in vain.
Endeth you peace, and your change is
Like the change in a measure that shrills
And slackens and ranges; your passion estranges
The love of the hills!

Nay! death is a portal of passing
To miseries other but sure.
Yet the snow on the hills amassing
The wind of an hour may endure;
But as day after day grows the summer
The crystals melt one after one.
The hill -- shall they numb her? Their frost overcome her?
Demand of the sun!

That uttermost death of my lady
Revealed in the heart of the range
Is as light in the groves long shady
As peace in the halls of change.
The web of the world is rended;
Stayed are the causal mills;
Time is ended; space unextended.
And end of the hills!

{57B}

{full page follows}

ALICE: AN ADULTERY

1903 {columns resume}

INTRODUCTION<<1>> BY THE EDITOR.

<<1. This and the "Critical Essay" (now omitted) were the result of collaboration. Some omissions, &c. in the text of the First Edition were intended to aid the illusion of this introduction.>>

YOKOHAMA, "April," 1901.

IT has often been pointed out how strange are the prophecies made from time to time by writers of what purports to be merely fiction. Of all the remarkable tales with which Mr. R. Kipling has delighted the world, none is more striking than that of McIntosh Jellaludin<> and his mysterious manuscript. And now, only a few years after reading that incredible tale, I myself, at Yokohama, come across a series of circumstances wonderfully analogous. But I will truthfully set down this history just as it all happened. I went one memorable Wednesday night to No. 29.<> For my advent in this most reputable quarter of the city, which is, after all, Yama,<> and equally handy for the consul, the chaplain, and the doctor, readers of Rossetti will expect no excuse; for their sakes I may frankly admit that I was actuated by

other motives than interest and solicitude for my companion, a youth still blindly groping for Romance, beneath the skirts of tawdry and painted Vice. Perhaps I may have hoped to save him from what men call the graver and angels the lesser consequences of his folly. This for the others.

As to the character of the mansion at {58A} which we arrived, after a journey no less dubious than winding, I will say that, despite its outward seeming, it was, in reality, a most respectable place; the main occupation of its inhabitants seemed to be the sale of as much "champagne" as possible; in which inspiring preface my friend was soon deeply immersed. ...

Golden-haired, a profound linguist, swearing in five Western and three Oriental languages, and comparable rather to the accomplished courtesans of old-time Athens than to the Imperial Peripatetics of the "Daily Telegraph" and Mr. Raven-Hill,<> her looks of fire turned my friend's silky and insipid moustache into a veritable Burning Bush. But puppy endearments are of little interest to one who has just done his duty by No. 9<> in distant Yoshiwara; so turned to the conversation of our dirty old Irish hostess, who, being drunk, grew more so, and exceedingly entertaining.

Of the central forces which sway mankind, her knowledge was more comprehensive than conventional. For thirty years she had earned her bread in the capacity of a Japanese Mrs. Warren;<> but having played with fire in many lands, the knowledge she had of her own subject, based on indefatigable personal research, was as accurate in detail as it was cosmopolitan in character. Yet she had not lost her ideals; she was a devout Catholic, and her opinion of the human understanding, despite her virginal innocence of Greek, was identical with that of Mr. Locke.<>

On occasions I am as sensitive to inexplicable {58B} interruption as Mr. Shandy,<> and from behind the hideous yellow partition came sounds as of the constant babbling of a human voice. Repeated glances in this direction drew from my entertainer the information that it was "only her husband," indicating the yellow-haired girl with the stem of her short clay pipe. She added that he was dying.

Curiosity, Compassion's Siamese twin, prompted a desire to see the sufferer. The old lady rose, not without difficulty, lifted the curtain, and let it fall behind me as I entered the gloom which lay beyond. On a bed, in that half-fathomed twilight, big with the scent of joss-sticks smouldering in a saucer before a little bronze Buddha-rupa,<> lay a man, still young, the traces of rare beauty in his face, though worn with suffering and horrid with a week's growth of beard.

He was murmuring over to himself some words which I could not catch, but my entrance, though he did not notice me, seemed to rouse him a little. I distinctly heard --

"These are the spells by which to re-assume
And empire o'er the disentangled doom"

He paused, sighing, then continued --

"To suffer woes which hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy power which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent:
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great, and joyous, beautiful, and free:
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory."<<1>>

<<1. Shelley, "Prometheus Unbound," iv.>>

The last phrase pealed trumpet-wise: he sank back into thought. "Yes," he said slowly, "neither to change, nor falter, nor repent." I moved forward, and he saw me.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"I am travelling in the East," I said. "I love Man also; I have come to see you. Who are you?" {59A}

He laughed pleasantly. "I am the child of many prayers."

There was a pause.

I stood still, thinking.

Here was surely the very strangest outcast of Society. What uncouth bypaths of human experience, across what mapless tracks beyond the social pale, must have led hither -- hither to death in this Anglo-Saxon-blasted corner of Japan, here, at the very outpost of the East. He spoke my thought.

"Here I lie," he said, "east of all things. All my life I have been travelling eastward, and now there is now no further east to go."

"There is America," I said. I had to say something.

"Where the disappearance of man has followed that of manners: the exit of God has not wished to lag behind that of grammar. I have no use of American men, and only one use for American women."

"Of a truth," I said, "the continent is accursed -- a very limbo."

"It is the counterfoil of evolution," said the man wearily. There was silence.

"What can I do for you?" I asked. "Are you indeed ill?"

"Four days more," he answered, thrilling with excitement, "and all my dreams will come true -- until I wake. But you can serve me, if indeed -- Did you hear me spouting poetry?"

I nodded, and lit my pipe. He watched me narrowly while the match illuminated my face.

"What poetry?"

I told him Shelley.

"Do you read Ibsen?" he queried, keening visibly. After a moment's pause: "He is the Sophocles of manners," I said, rewarded royally for months of weary waiting. My strange companion sat up transfigured. "The Hour," he murmured, "and the Man! ... What of Tennyson?"

"Which Tennyson?" I asked.

The answer seemed to please him.

"In Memoriam?" he replied.

"He is a neurasthenic counter-jumper."

"And of the Idylls?"

"Sir Thomas<> did no wrong; can impotence excuse his posthumous emasculation?"<> {59B}

He sank back contented. "I have prayed to my god for many days," he said, "and by one of the least of my life's miracles you are here; worthy to receive my trust. For when I knew that I was to die, I destroyed all the papers which held the story of my life -- all save one. That I saved; the only noble passage, perhaps -- among the many notable. Men will say that it is stained; you, I think, should be wiser. It is the story of how the Israelites crossed the Red Sea. They were not drowned, you know (he seemed to lapse into a day-dream), and they came out on the Land of Promise side. But they had to descend therein."

"They all died in the wilderness," I said, feeling as if I understood this mystical talk, which, indeed, I did not. But I felt inspired.

"Ay me, they died -- as I am dying now."

He turned to the wall and sought a bundle of old writing on a shelf. "Take this," he said. "Edit it as if it were your own: let the world know how wonderful it was." I took the manuscript from the frail, white hand.

He seemed to forget me altogether.

"Namo tassa Bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhasa,"<<"Glory to the Blessed One, the Perfected One, the Enlightened One." It is the common Buddhist salute to their Master.>> he murmured, turning to his little black Buddha-rupa.

There was a calm like unto -- might I say, an afterwards?

"There is an end of joy and sorrow,
Peace all day long, all night, all morrow,"

he began drowsily.

A shrill voice rose in a great curse. The hoarse anger of drunken harlotry snarled back. "Not a drop more," shouted my friend, adding many things. It was time for my return.

"I will let them know," I whispered. "Good-bye."

"There is not one thing with another;
But Evil saith to Good: "My brother -""<>

He went on unheeding.
I left him to his peace.

My re-appearance restored harmony. The {60A} fulvous and fulgurous lady grew comparatively tranquil; the pair withdrew. The old woman lay sprawled along the divan sunk in a drunken torpor.

I unrolled the manuscript and read.

Brutal truth-telling humour, at times perhaps too Rabelaisian; lyrics, some of enchanting beauty, others painfully imitative; sonnets of exceedingly unequal power, a perfectly heartless introduction (some fools would call it pathetic),<> and, as a synthesis of the whole, an impression of profound sadness and, perhaps, still deeper joy, were my reward. Together with a feeling that the writer must have been a philosopher of the widest and deepest learning and penetration, and a regret that he showed no more of it in his poetry. First and last, I stood amazed, stupefied: so stand I still. Dramatic propriety forbade me seeing him again; he was alone when he started.

Let us not too bitterly lament! He would hate him who would "upon the rack of this tough world stretch him out longer."

To the best of my poor ability I have executed his wishes, omitting, however, his name and all references sufficiently precise to give pain to any person still living.< His handwriting was abominably difficult, some words quite indecipherable. I have spent long and laborious hours in conjecture, and have, I hope, restored his meaning in almost every case. But in the sonnets of the 12th, 18th, 23rd, 24th, 29th, 35th, 41st, 43rd and 48th days, also in "At Last," "Love and Fear," and "Lethe," one or more whole lines have been almost impossible to read. The literary student will be able readily to detect my patchwork emendations. These I have dared to make because his whole pattern (may I use the word?) is so elaborate and perfect that I fear to annoy the reader by leaving any blanks, feeling that my own poverty of diction will be less noticeable than any actual hiatus in the sense or rhythm. I attempt neither eulogy nor criticism here. Indeed, it seems to me entirely uncalled for. His words were: "Let the world know how wonderful it was," that is, his love and hers; not "how wonderful it is," that is, his poem.

The poem is simple, understandable, direct, not verbose. More I demand not, {60B} seeing it is written (almost literally so) in blood; for I am sure that he was dying of that love for Alice, whose marvellous beauty it was his mission (who may doubt it?) to reveal. For the burning torch of truth may smoke, but it is our one sure light in passion and distress. "The jewelled silence of the stars" is, indeed, the light of a serener art; but love is human, and I give nothing for the tawdry gems of style when the breast they would adorn is that of a breathing, living beauty of man's love, the heart of all the

world. Nor let us taint one sympathy with even a shadow of regret. Let us leave him where

"Sight nor sound shall war against him more,
For whom all winds are quiet as the sun,
All waters as the shore."<<1>>

<<1. Swinburne, "Ave atque Vale.">>

NOTE. -- The sudden and tragic death of the Editor has necessitated the completion of his task by another hand. The introduction was, however, in practically its present form.

WHAT LAY BEFORE.

WHITE POPPY.

AMID the drowsy dream,
Lit by some fitful beam
Of other light
Than the mere sun, supreme
On all the glint and gleam
Shooting through night,

Above the water-way
Where my poor corpse must stay,
I bend and float away
From human sight.

Unto the floral face,
Carven in ancient grace
Of Gods or Greeks,
The whole sky's way gives place:
Open the walls of space,
And silence speaks. {61A}
See! I am floating far
Beyond space and sun and star,
As drifts a nenuphar
Down liliated creeks.

Beyond the heavens I see
The pale embroidery
Of some wan child

Waster by earth and sea,
Whose kisses were too free,
Too swift and wild;
A Maenad's floating tress
Lost in the wilderness
Of death's or my caress,
Discrowned, defiled.

Clad in pale green and rose,
Her thin face flickers, glows,
Tempestuous flame.
Horrid and harsh she goes,
Speaks, trembles, wakes and knows
How frail is shame!
Grows vast and cloudy and is
The whole mouth's sobbing kiss,
And crushes me with bliss
Beyond a name.

Then fall I from excess
Of bitter ecstasies,
Pale ghosts of blood,
To worlds where palaces
Shine through dim memories
Of flower and flood,

Shine in pale opal and pearl,
Void of bright boy or girl,
Desolate halls that furl
Their shapes subdued.

And wide they sunder, wide
They fall into the tide
Of fallen things.
Me, me, O meek-browed bride,
Horrible faces hide
And devilish wings. {61B}
Me the grim harpeis hold
In kisses slaver-cold,
Mute serpent-shapes of gold
With serpent stings.

The dreadful bridal won,
The demon banquet done,

My flesh let loose: --
Rises a strange red sun,
A sight to slay or stun;
Sepulchral dews
Fall from the rayless globe,
Whose sightless fingers probe
My golden-folded robe,
My soul's misuse.

And in that thankless shape
Vines grow without a grape,
Thorns roseless spring.
Nay! There is no escape: --
The yawning portals gape,
The orb'd ring
As by a whirlpool drawn
Into that devil-dawn: --
I sink and shriek and fawn
Upon the thing.

Ha! in the desperate pang
And subtle stroke and fang
Of hateful kisses
Whence devilish laughter sprang,
Close on me with a clang
The brazen abysses

The leopard-coloured paw
Strikes, and the cruel jaw
Hides me in the glutless maw --
Crown of ten blisses!

For all the vision world
Is closed on me and curled
Into the deep
Of my slow soul, and hurled
Through lampless lands, and furl'd,
Sharp folds and steep:
Till all unite in one,
Seven planets in the sun,
And I am deeper done
Into full sleep. {62A}

MESSALINE.

BENEATH the living cross I lie
And swoon towards eternity:
Prodigious sinewy shapes, and lean
And curving limbs of Messaline.
The deep arched eyes, the floating mane, --
One pierces, one wraps-in my brain.
A crown of thorn, a spear of clean
Cold fire of dying Messaline.
Swart tangles of devouring hair,
The scorpion labyrinth and snare,
Leprous entanglements of sense,
The Imminence of the Immense.
And in the deep hard breath I draw
Kissed from her strangling mouth and maw,
I feel the floating deaths that dwell
About that citadel of hell;
A soft lewd flavour, an obscene
Mysterious self of Messaline.
Or, in the kisses that swoop low
To catch my breath and kill me so,
I feel the ghostliness of this
Unreal shuttle-game -- the kiss!
Her moving body sobs above,
And calls its lechery true love.
Out from the flame of heart she plucks

One flower of fiery light, and sucks
Its essence up within her lips,
And flings it into mine, and dips
And bends her body, writhes and swims
To link the velvet of our limbs,
My drouthy passion worn and keen,
And lusty life of Messaline.
The heart's blood in her boiling over
She sucked from many a dying lover:
The purple of her racing veins
Leapt from some soul's despairing pains;
She drinks up life as from a cup;
She drains our health and builds it up
Into her body; takes our breath,
And we -- we dream not it is death!
Arm unto arm and eye to eye,

Breast to great breast and thigh to thigh,
We look, and strain, and laugh, and die.
I see the head hovering above
To swoop for cruelty or love; {62B}
I feel the swollen veins below
The knotted throat; the ebb and flow
Of blood, not milk, in breasts of fire;
Of deaths, not fluctuants, of desire;
Of molten lava that abides
Deep in the vast volcanic sides;
Deep scars where kisses once bit in
Below young mountains that be twin,
Stigmata cruciform of sin,
The diary of Messaline.
The moving mountains crater-crowned;
The valleys deep and silver-bound;
The girdle treacherously wound;
One violet-crest mounded mole,
Some blood-stain filtered from the soul;
The light and shadow shed between
My soul and God from Messaline.
And even as a dark and hidden
Furnace roars out in woods forbidden,
A sullen tide of molten steel
Runs from deep furrows in the wheel;
So from afar one central heat
Sends the loud pulse to fever beat;
So from one crown and heart of fire

Spring the vast phantoms of desire,
Impossible and epicene,
Familiar souls of Messaline.
And as, when thunder broods afar
Imperial destinies of war,
Men see the haze and heat, and feel
The sun's rays like a shaft of steel,
Seeing no sun; even so the night
Clouds that deep miracle from sight:
Until this destiny be done
Hangs the corona on the sun;
And I absorbed in those unclean
Ghost-haunted veins of Messaline.

CALIFORNIA.

FORGED by God's fingers in His furnace, Fate,
My destiny drew near the glowing shore
Where California hides her golden ore,
Her rubies and her beryls; gross and great, {63A}
Her varied fruits and flowers alike create
Glories most unimaginable, more
Than Heaven's own meadows match; yet this is sore,
A stain; not one of these is delicate.

Save only the clear green within the sea --
Because that rolls all landless from Japan.
I did not know until I missed it here
How beautiful that beauty is to me,
That life that bears Death's sigil<<1>> traced too clear,
Blue lines within the beauty that is man.

<<1. Signature, usually applied to the supposed signatures of divine beings.>>

MARGARET.

THE moon spans Heaven's architrave;
Stars in the deep are set;
Written in gold on the day's grave,
"To love, and to forget;"
And sea-winds whisper o'er the wave

The name of Margaret.

A heart of gold, a flower of white,
A blushing flame of snow,
She moves like latticed moons of light --
And O! her voice is low,
Shell-murmurs borne to Amphitrite,
Exulting as they go.

Her stature waves, as if a flower
Forgot the evening breeze,
But heard the charioted hour
Sweep from the farther seas,
And kept sweet time within her bower,

And hushed mild melodies.

So grave and delicate and tall --
Shall laughter never sweep
Like a moss-guarded waterfall
Across her ivory sleep?
A tender laugh most musical?
A sigh serenely deep? {63B}

She laughs in wordless swift desire
A soft Thalassian tune;
Her eyelids glimmer with the fire
That animates the moon;
Her chaste lips flame, as flames aspire
Of poppies in mid-June.

She lifts the eyelids amethyst,
And looks from half-shut eyes,
Gleaming with miracles of mist,
Gray shadows on blue skies;
And on her whole face sunrise-kissed,
Child-wonderment most wise.

The whitest arms in all the earth
Blush from the lilac bed.
Like a young star even at its birth
Shines out the golden head.
Sad violets are the maiden girth,
Pale flames night-canopied.

O gentlest lady! Lift those eyes,
And curl those lips to kiss!
Melt my young boyhood in thy sighs,
A subtler Salmacis!
Hide, in that peace, these ecstasies;
In that fair fountain, this!

She fades as starlight on the stream,
As dewfall in the dell;
All life and love, one ravishing gleam
Stolen from sleep's crucible;
That kiss, that vision is a dream: --
And I -- most miserable!

Still Echo wails upon the steep,
"To love -- and to forget!"
Still sombre whispers from the deep
Sob through Night's golden net,
And waft upon the wings of sleep
The name of Margaret.

ALICE: AN ADULTERY.

"Commit not with man's sworn spouse."
"King Lear."

AGAINST the fiat of that God discrowned,
Unseated by Man's justice, and replaced,
By Law most bountiful and maiden-faced
And mother-minded: passing the low bound {64A}
Of man's poor law we leapt at last and found
Passion; and passing the dim halls disgraced
Found higher love and larger and more chaste,
A calm sphinx waiting in secluded ground.

Hear the sad rhyme of how love turned to lust,
And lust invigorated love, and love
Shone brighter for the stain it rose above,
Gathering roses from the quickening dust;
And faith despoiled and desecrated trust

Wore pearlier plumes of a diviner dove.

THE FIRST DAY.

"Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?"
"As You Like It."

THE waving surf shone from the Peaceful Sea.<<1>>
Young palms embowered the house where Beauty sate
Still but exultant, silent but elate

In its own happiness and majesty
Of a mild soul unstirred by rivalry
Of any life beyond its own sweet state.
I looked around me, wondered whether Fate
Had found at last a woman's love for me.

<<1. "I.e." the Pacific.>>

I had no hope: she was so grave and calm,
So shining with the dew-light of her soul,
So beautiful beyond a woman's share.
Yet -- here! Soft airs, and perfume through the palm,
And moonlight in the groves of spice, control
The life that would not love and yet be fair. {64B}

THE SECOND DAY.

"Keep you in the rear of your affection
Out of the shot and danger of desire."
"Hamlet."

I WAS so hopeless that I turned away
And gave my love to foul oblivion,
Shuttered my bosom's window from the sun,
Kindled a corpse-light and proclaimed "The day!";
Lurked in Aeaean<<1>> fens to elude the ray
Whose beauty might disturb me: I did shun
The onyx eyes that saw me not as one
Possible even for a moment's play.

<<1. Circe, who dwelt on the island of Aea, transformed men into
swine.>>

Thus I was tangled in some house of hell,
Giving mine own soul's beauty up to lust,
Hoping to build some fort impregnable
Against my love: instead the deep disgust
Of my own beasthood crushed it into dust,
And left my manhood twisted in her spell.

THE THIRD DAY.

"My love is most immaculate white and red."
"Love's Labour's Lost."

SHE was more graceful than the royal palm;
Tall, with imperial looks, and excellence
Most simply swathed in spotless elegance,
And holy and tuneful like some stately psalm.
Her breath was like a grove of myrrh and balm,
And all the sight grew dim before the sense
Of blind attraction toward; an influence
Not incompatible with her own calm. {65A}

All the red roses of the world were blended
To give the lively colour of her face;
All the white lilies of the sea shone splendid
Where the blue veins afforded them a space;
Like to the shapely fragrance of dawn's shrine
She gleamed through mist, enchanting, Erycine.<<1>>

<<1. At Eryx, in Sicily, was a famous temple of Venus.>>

FOURTH DAY.

"Amen, if you love her; for the lady is very well worthy."
"Much Ado about Nothing."

I TOOK another way to shield my love.
I turned my thoughts to the abyss of sky,
Pierced the frail veil, and sought Eternity;
Where the Gods reign most passionless above
All foolish loves of men, and weary of

The slow procession of Earth's mystery;
Where worlds, not men, are born and live and die,
And aeons flit unnoticed as a dove.

Thither I fled, busied myself with these;
When -- lo! I saw her shadow following!
In every cosmic season-tide of spring
She rose, being the spring: in utter peace
She was with me and in me: thus I saw
Ours was not love, but destiny, and law.

REINCARNATION.

IN Life what hope is always unto men?
Stories of Arthur that shall come again
To cleanse the Earth of her eternal stain,
Elias, Charlemagne, Christ. What matter then? {65B}
What matter who, or how, or even when?
If we but look beyond the primal pain,
And trust the Future to write all things plain,
Graven on brass with predestined pen.

This is the doom. Upon the blind blue sky
A little cloud, no larger than an hand!
Whether I live and love, or love and die,
I care not: either way I understand.
To me -- to live is Christ; to die is gain:
For I, I also, I shall come again.

THE FIFTH DAY.

"Thine eyes, sweet lady, have infected mine."
"Richard III."

ALL thought of work is almost cast aside.
I followed like a dog the way she went,
Speaking but seldom, very well content
To day-dream, oft imagining a bride,
A wife, a lover, even a sister, tied
By some soft bond of twinning: thus I blent
A real joy with a brighter element
Of fancy free to wander far and wide.

For as I followed by the shore and bended
Over her footsteps in the wood, my will
Rose to high strength assertive and transcended
The petty forms of the seducer's skill.
Chaste love strode forth, a warrior's stern and splendid
Determined footsteps on the Arcadian Hill.

THE SIXTH DAY.

"Are there not charms
By which the property of youth and maidhood
May be abused?"
"Othello."

I DREW a hideous talisman of lust
In many colours where strong sigils shone;
Crook'd mystic language of oblivion,
Fitted to crack and scorch the terrene crust {66A}
And bring the sulphur streaming from the thrust
Of Satan's winepress, was ill written on
The accursed margin, and the orison
Scrawled backwards, as a bad magician must.

By these vile trick, abominable spells,
I drew foul horrors from a many hells --
Though I had fathomed Fate; though I had seen
Chastity charm-proof arm the sea-gray eyes
And sweet clean body of my spirit's queen,
Where nothing dwells that God did not devise.

THE SEVENTH DAY.

"This word 'love,' which greybeards call divine,
Be resident in men like one another
And not in me: I am myself alone."
3 "Henry VI."

THEREFORE I burnt the wicked pantacle,
And cast my love behind me once again.
I mused upon the mystery of pain,
Where the Gods taught me by another spell

Not chosen from the armoury of Hell,
But given the Mercury to cleanse the stain
Of the old planet: thus I wrote me plain
Secrets divine -- tremendous, terrible!

Thus I forgot my soul and dwelt alone
In the strong fortress of the active mind
Whose steady flame burned eager in the night;
Yet was some shadow on the starry throne,

Some imperfection playing hoodman-blind
So that I saw not perfectly aright. {66B}

THE EIGHT DAY.

"A certain aim he took
At a fair Vestal throned by the West."
"Midsummer Night's Dream."

HERE in the extreme west of all the earth
This Vestal sate; and I from Cupid's bow
Loosed a fair shaft of verses shapen so
As to fling love through the chaste girdle's girth,
And show my love how meek was my love's birth,
How innocent its being: thus arow
Stood the mild lines, immaculate, to show
My harmless passion and her own great worth.

She could not be offended: and moreover --
When at the nightfall I sought Heaven's light,
All my work grew unspotted, done aright!
The high Gods came above my head to hover,
Because I worked with a diviner might,
The perfect sage being the perfect lover.

THE NINTH DAY.

"How canst thou tell she will deny thy suit
Before thou make a trial of her love?"
1 "Henry VI."

I WAS most weary of my work: the mind
Shuddered at all the wonders it had written,
And the whole body by the spirit smitten

Groaned: so I went and left my love behind,
Danced the gross "hula," <<1>> hardly disinclined,
By a new lust emphatically bitten;
And so in flames at harlot glances litten
I sought that solace I shall never find. {67A}

<<1. The indecent dance of the South Sea Islands.>>

Fool! not to tell her. Triple fool to fly
The sunny glance, the moonlight meditation,
For even the light of heaven. How much worse
The dark antithesis, the coarser curse
Of Eden! Pass, O shadows of creation,
Into the daybreak of Eternity!

THE TENTH DAY.

O God! I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams."
"Hamlet."

THE mere result of all this was a dream.
The day passed damned, void of my love's dear light,
And stole acursed to the endless night,
Forgotten (as I trust) by God: no beam
Of memory lighting it down Time's dark stream.
I dreamt: my shrine was broken and my might
Defiled, and all my Gods abased, in sight
Of all blind Heaven exenterate<<1>> and extreme.<<2>>

<<1. Disembowelled.>>

<<2. Used here to mean "at the last gasp.">>

The foulest traitor of all woman kind
I ever knew, became my friend:<<1>> unclean
Sexual abominations floated through,
More foul because a golden cord did wind
Unspotted through that revel epicene,
The pure faith of one woman that was true. {67B}

<<1. This circumstance was later fulfilled: I having judged her actions on insufficient evidence. -- AUTHOR.>>

THE ELEVENTH DAY.

"What win I if I gain the thing I seek?"
"Rape of Lucrece."

THERE is much sorcery in the word eleven.

I took my lover's image pale and clear,
Fixed in my mind; I saw her standing near,
Wooed her, conjured her by the power of heaven,
Of my own mind, the Genii of the Seven,
To come and live with me and be my dear,
To love me in the spirit without fear; --
Leaving the body's love to follow at even.

Seemeth it not absurd? to use the thought,
The utterly divine impersonal
Mind of a man, the pure, the spiritual,
To such a propose rather less than nought,
A woman's love -- considering that all
Wise men assure us that it may be bought!

THE TWELFTH DAY.

"I grant thou wert not married to my Muse
And therefore mayst without attaint o'erlook
The dedicated words which writers use
Of their fair subjects."
"The Sonnets."

I LEARNT at last some sort of confidence,
Called me the fool I was, knowing my skill
Proven of old, all women's native will
To do all things soever that lack sense,
Especially if evil: thoughts immense
Like this I thought: plumes of my amorous quill
I tickled her withal: then grave and still
Waited secure: the silence grew intense. {68A}

She read -- and saw me but a beardless boy,
Too young to fear, too gentle not to pity,
Not overbold; quite powerless to destroy
Her life's long peace, the ten-year-walled city.<<1>>

Why be too cruel, check such baby joy?
She said "I think the poem very pretty."

<<1. She had been married ten years.>>

RED POPPY.<<1>>

<<1. The poem in question.>>

I HAVE no heart to sing.
What offering may I bring,
Alice, to thee?
My great love's lifted wing
Weakens, unwearying,
And droops with me,
Seeing the sun-kindled hair
Close in the face more fair,
The sweet soul shining there
For God to see.

Surely some angle shed
Flowers for the maiden head,
Ephemeral flowers!
I yearn, not comforted.
My heart has vainly bled
Through age-long hours.
To thee my spirit turns;
My bright soul aches and burns,
As a dry valley yearns
For spring and showers.

Splendid, remote, a fane
Alone and unprofane,
I know thy breast.
These bitter tears of pain
Flood me, and fall again
Not into rest.
Me, whose sole purpose is
To gain one gainless kiss,
And make a bird's my bliss,
Shrined in that nest. {68B}

O fearful firstling dove!

My dawn and spring of love,
Love's light and lure!
Look (as I bend above)
Through bright lids filled thereof
Perfect and pure,

Thy bloom of maidenhood.
I could not: if I could,
I would not: being good,
Also endure!

Cruel, to tear or mar
The chalice'd nenuphar;
Cruel to press
The rosebud; cruel to scar
Or stain the flower-star
With mad caress.
But crueller to destroy
The leaping life and joy
Born in a careless boy
From lone distress.

More cruel than art thou
The calm and chaste of brow,
If thou dost this,
Forget the feeble vow
Ill sworn: all laws allow
Pity, that is
Kin unto love, and mild.
List to the sad and wild
Crying of the lonely child
Who asks a kiss.

One kiss, like snow, to slip,
Cool fragrance from thy lip
To melt on mine;
One kiss, a white-sail ship
To laugh and leap and dip
Her brows divine;
One kiss, a starbeam faint
With love of a sweet saint,
Stolen like a sacrament
In the night's shrine!

One kiss, like moonlight cold

Lighting with floral gold
The lake's low tune;
One kiss, one flower to fold, {69A}
On its own calyx rolled

At night, in June!
One kiss, like dewfall, drawn
A veil o'er leaf and lawn --
Mix night, and noon, and dawn,
Dew, flower, and moon!

One kiss, intense, supreme!
The sense of Nature's dream
And scent of Heaven
Shown in the glint and gleam
Of the pure dawn's first beam,
With earth for leaven;
Moulded of fire and gold,
Water and wine to fold
Me in its life, and hold! --
In all but seven!

I would not kiss thee, I!
Lest my lip's charactery
Ruin thy flower.
Curve thou one maidenly
Kiss, stooping from thy sky
Of peace and power!
Thine only be the embrace! --
I move not from my place,
Feel the exultant face
Mine for an hour!

THE THIRTEENTH DAY.

"If it be a sin to make a true election, she is damned."
"Cymbeline."

IN the dim porchway where the sea's deep boom
Under our very feet made ceaseless song,
We sate, remote, the lone lanai<<1>> along
Sequestered from the young moon in the gloom {69B}
Of early even: then the tender bloom
Shone on her cheek and deepened as the strong

Arms gathered round her, more than shame or wrong,
And the soft question murmured "Love you -- whom?"

<<1. The South Sea word for balcony, or rather verandah.>>

The deepening rose; the heart's pulse quickening;
The fear; the increasing ecstasy of this --
A little cloud lifted a sombre wing
Shadowing our secret breath from Artemis --
Breasts met and arms enclosed, and all the spring
Grew into summer with the first long kiss.

THE FOURTEENTH DAY.

"Some there be that shadows kiss;
Such have but a shadow's bliss;
There be fools alive, I wis."
"Merchant of Venice."

ALL day we chose each moment possible
When to the other's face each face might cling,
Each kiss burn forth, a double fiery sting
Exalting us in joy foreseen to swell
A mighty exultation; it befell,
However, that I saw the shadowy thing
Lurk behind love, and flap a scornful wing,
Seeing our honour stood a citadel.

I saw the foolishness of love and saith:
"I am exalted over shame and death,
But will not take my fill of death and shame."
For each kiss leaps, a more insistent breath,
And adds fresh fuel to the amorous flame,
Not quells it -- Is not honour but a name? {70A}

THE FIFTEENTH DAY.

"Were kisses all the joys in bed,
One woman would another wed."
"Sonnets to Sundry Notes of Music."

ANOTHER day rose of unceasing fire:

Kisses made monstrous for their sterile storm
Maddening with sea-sounds, as of lute or shawm

Fluting and clashing in extreme desire;
The silly "Thus far and no farther," nigher
Each hour to break (poor arbitrary form!)
As each kiss bade our bodies wed and warm
Give love one chance before its wave retire.

Not so: this trial was the tiniest
Man ever knew, confronted afterward
With giant fears and passions; -- long to fight
And last to yield a Maenad-swelling breast
Unto a furious Dionysian horde
Drunk not with wine, but with avenging night.

THE SIXTEENTH DAY.

"My chastity's the jewel of our house
Bequeathed down from many ancestors,
Which were the greatest obloquy i' th' world
For me to lose."
"All's Well."

THERE was no secret cave of the wood's womb
Where we might kiss all day without a start
Of fear that meant to stay and must depart,
Nor any corner where the sea's perfume {70B}
Might shelter love in some wave-carven tomb.
But Maytime shone in us; with words of art
I drew her down reluctant to my heart,
When night was silence and my bed the gloom.

So without sin we took strange sacrament,
Whose wine was kisses, and whose bread the flower
Of fast and fervent cleaving breast to breast.
As lily bend to lily we were bent,
Not as mere man to woman: all the dower
Of martyred Virgins crowned our dangerous quest.

ALICE.

THE roses of the world are sad,

The water-lilies pale,

Because my lover takes her lad
beneath the moonlight veil.
No flower may bloom this happy hour --
Unless my Alice be the flower.

The stars are hidden in dark and mist,
The moon and sun are dead,
Because my love has caught and kissed
My body in her bed.
No light may shine this happy night --
Unless my Alice be the light.

So silent are the thrush, the lark!
The nightingale's at rest,
Because my love loves the dark,
And has me in her breast.
No song this happy night be heard! --
Unless my Alice be the bird.

The sea that roared around the house
Is fallen from alarms,
Because my lover calls me spouse,
And takes me to her arms.
This night no sound of breakers be! --
Unless my Alice be the sea. {71A}

Of man and maid in all the world
Is stilled the swift caress,
Because my lover has me curled
In her own loveliness.
No kiss be such a night as this! --
Unless by Alice be the kiss.

No blade of grass awaiting takes
The dew fresh-fallen above,
Because my lover swoons, and slakes
Her body's thirst of love.
This night no dewfall from the blue! --
Unless my Alice be the dew.

This night -- O never dawn shall crest
The world of waking,
Because my lover has my breast

On hers for dawn and spring.
This night shall never be withdrawn --
Unless my Alice be the dawn.

THE SEVENTEENTH DAY.

"Now I want
Spirits to enforce, art to enchant."
"Tempest."

LAST night -- but the boy shrieked in's sleep -- then, there
I had ended all! Having ingressed the track
That leads from green or white-crowned hours to black,
The pleasant portals of the scorpion snare,
First gleaming toils of an enchantress' hair
That afterward shall change their fervours slack
To strong gripe of a devil-fish: go back?
The hand is put forth to the plough -- beware!

I took my shrine down:<<1>> at the night we lay
Four hours debating between fear and sin:
Whether our love went deeper than the skin, {71B}
Or lower than the lips: love won the day.
We nestled like young turtles that be twin
Close till the morn-star chased the moon away.

<<1. Meaning that spiritual work was abandoned for the moment, and that
he wished to use the room for a profane purpose.>>

LOVE AND FEAR.

THE rose of the springtime that bended
Its delicate head to the breeze
Is crimson and stately and splendid
Now summer is here and at ease;
Love risen as the sun hath transcended its passion and peace.

In a garden of dark foliage that clusters
Round your face as a rosebud withdrawn,
New splendour springs carmine and lustres
Your cheeks with the coming of dawn,
Love's light as an army that musters its plumes -- and is gone.

For fear as a fountain, that trembles
With wind, is arisen, and hides
The light of your love, and dissembles
The roar of the passionate tides;
Though a flickering flame it resembles, love is, and abides.

I see through the moonlight that covers
(As a mist on the mountain) your head
The flame of your heart as a lover's
Shine out in your face and be shed,
A ruby that flashes and hovers and droops and is dead.

As a saint in a vision half hidden
I see the sweet face in a mist,
A nimbus of glory unbidden
That shades you or shows as you list.
But I, as a bridegroom, unhidden, may kiss -- and am kissed. {72A}

In the light and the manifest splendour
That shows you in darkness a bride,
Pale blossom of moonlight and slender,
A lily that sways in the tide,
A star that falls earthward to bend her sweet breast to my side: --

No depth of the darkness may shield you
From eyes that with love are aflame,
No darkness, but light, as you yield you
To love that is stronger than shame,
No music but kisses, that pealed you their paeon, proclaim:

That the light of heaven is shaded,
The sound of the sea is made still,
The climax shall come unupbraided
Obedient alone to our will,
And the flowers that were fallen and faded drink dew to their fill:

Dew filling your eyes and their lashes
With tender mirage of a tear;
Dew fallen on the mouth as it flashes,
The kiss that is master of fear;
Dew covering the body that dashes and clings to me here.

O fairest, O rose among roses!

O flower of the innermost fire!
O tune of my soul that encloses
All life, the tempestuous lyre!
O dawn of my dawn that reposes and darts in desire!

And death and its portals are rifted,
Life listens our kisses that weep;
Love hears, and his measure is shifted,
Grows solemn and deadly and deep;
Love's ship droops its sails and is drifted in silence to sleep.

And soft as a seal on our slumber
Dreams drift of Aureorean dew;
Dreams shapen of flames that encumber
The shrine of the morn in the blue;
Flames shapen of lips that outnumber our kisses anew. {72B}

THE EIGHTEENTH DAY.

"Touches so soft still conquer chastity."
"Passionate Pilgrim."

SHE grew most fearful, starting at slight noise;
As knowing that the sting of shame was hers
Worse than a guilty love administers,
Since our pure shame unworthily destroys
The love of all she had, her girls and boys,
Her home, their lives: and yet my whisper stirs
Into live flame her passion, and deters
Her fear from spurning all the day's due joys.

She had not dared to speak one word, to tell
How deep and pure a fountain sunward leapt
In her life's garden: but to-night she lay
In my intense embraces: so the spell
Moved her: "I love you," said she. So we kept,
Remurmuring that one phrase until the day.

THE NINETEENTH DAY.

"The boy is foolish, and I fear not him."
"Richard III."

SHE dared not come into my room to-night.
So? I was acquiescent, sharp despair
And nervous purpose mixing in me there
The while I waited: then I glided light
(Clad in the swart robe of an eremite)<<1>>
Across the passage. Now, all unaware
My kisses underneath the veil of vair
Woke her: she turned and sighed and held me tight.

<<1. Crowley was accustomed to wear a black robe of a magical pattern as
a "robe de chambre.">>

Her child slept gently on the farther side.
But we took danger by the throat, despised
All but the one sole splendour that we prized; {73A}
And she, whose robe was far too slight to hide
The babe-smooth breasts, was far too frail to cover
Her heart's true fire and music from her lover.

THE TWENTIETH DAY.

"'Val.' How long hath she been deformed?
'Speed.' Ever since you loved her."
"Two Gentlemen of Verona."

AGAIN the unveiled goddess of delight
Watched us at midnight: there my lover lay
Child-breasted, maiden as the rose of day
Dawning on snowy mountains: through deep night
Her body gleamed self-luminously white
With the sweet soul that sundered the quick clay,
And all her being was a sense of May; --
Scent conquering colour, soul out-running sight.

Not with the Lysian,<<1>> nor Iacchian dew
Of frenzy covered, but with warmer flakes
Of Aphrodite shed upon our life,
We clung still closer, till the soul ran through
Body to body, twined like sunny snakes,

Sinlessly knowing we were man and wife.

<<1. Cornelius Agrippa distinguishes three frenzies; of Apollo, Dionysys, and Aphrodite; song, wine, and love.>>

THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

"Mal.' Dispute it like a man.
'Macd.' I shall do so.
But I must also feel it as a man.
"Macbeth."

I HAD a fearful dream (on going away)
Of scorpion women curled in my caress,
And twenty days they closed on my distress
Not giving me relief, but gold and gray, {73B}
Cold and intense; the one-and-twentieth day
They drew my life out, one exceeding stress,
Volcanic anguish! -- Here's the strange excess:
I called, ere waking, on the name "Eheieh!"

Solve me the riddle of the dream who can!
That night I sought a new toy for a lure,
And she would not: but knew how hard to endure
Is love like ours, the love of purity.
So she: "Dispute it like a man!" and I"
"But I must also feel it as a man!"

Note. Eheieh is the Hebrew for "I am that I am." Its numerical value is 21. I was not aware at the time that this was the 21st day. -- AUTHOR.<>

THE TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

"I'll have her: but I will not keep her long."
"Richard III."

IT was impossible that she should come
Over the leagues of summer-coloured sea
Alone with love and laughter and tears and me
To the toy land<<1>> of the chrysanthemum,
Where all the flowers lack scent, the birds are dumb,
The fruits are tasteless: where the jewelled lea

And the many-leaved greenery
Is dwarf: French gem-work on a baby's thumb.

<<1. Japan.>>

The Yankee God<<1>> frowned also on the plan.
We had enough, no more. But I insist,
Still thinking I was master of my heart:
Saying, "Another month to be a man,
Another month to kiss her and be kissed,
And then -- all time to Magic and to Art!" {74A}

<<1. The dollar.>>

THE TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

"He has strangled
His language in his tears."
"K. Hen. VIII."

MY comedy has changed its blithe aspect
To bitterest face of tragedy; she said:
"Alas! O soul of mine! I am surely dead,
Seeing my life is by a serpent wrecked
Of sore disease: but spare me, and reflect
That in few months I die: but were I wed --
O lover! O desire discomfited!
I die at once: consider, and elect."

How could I otherwise than spare my wife?
With tender lips and fingers one strong kiss
Swooned slave-wise even before the gate of bliss,
No more: for I rose up and cursed my life,
Hating the God that made us to dissever
So soon so sweet a love, and that for ever.

"Ut. Canc." sublatum iri dixisse. Vae Capricorno!<> (Author's Note.)

THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

"She having the truth of honour in her, hath made him that gracious denial

which he is most glad to receive."
"Measure of Measure."

OF course I might have know it was a lie.

Nathless, I wept all morning and despaired.
Nothing for any life of earth I cared,
Neither for heaven: I railed against the sky, {74B}
Hating the earth, the sea, the witchery
Of all the universe: my breast I bared
And cursed God, hoping lightning; and I dared
Not ask my love "In very truth -- you die!"

I could not bear it longer; then she spake:
"I lied indeed, love, for mine honour's sake,"
And I reproached her for her love's distrust,
Saying "I would not so in any wise
Have lowered love unto the level of lust
But now--" I hid my thought in tears and sighs.

THE TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

"I am in health, I breathe, and see thee ill."
"Richard II."

ALICE was desperately ill at morn.
Hour by sweet hour I watched her sorrowing,
While the strong fever fought unconquering
With native coolness of her life, o'er-worn
Or poisoned; thus I fought the long forlorn
Battle all day, until the evening
Brought back sweet health on sleep and noiseless wing:
Strong love of the long battle was reborn.

The child slept elsewhere that she might sleep well.
Therefore, not fearing anything, I came;
Lit my love's candle at her body's flame,
And fought not with the fevers now that swell
Our burning lips and bosoms, until shame
Nearly surrendered the sweet citadel. {75A}

THE TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

"I think the devil will not have me damned.
... he would never else cross me thus."
"Merry Wives of Windsor."

THIS time she set her will against my will;
Swore that she would not come: in my despair
I half believed her an enchantress fair
Cruel as hell and dowered with subtle skill
To strain my life out with her love, and kill
My soul with misery: suddenly a rare
Swift smile set shimmering all the ambient air,
And then I knew she was my true love still.

She would not come? Why, were Hell's portals fast
Shut, as to Orpheus on Eurydice,
Their brass would break before love's gold and steel,
The sharpness inlaid with sweet tracery
Of talismans of virtue: she is leal
To come and live and be my love at last.

UNDER THE PALMS.

THE woodland hollows know us, bird-enchanted,
Likewise the spaces of the ghostly sea,
The lake's abundant lilies, the pale slanted
Moonlight on flowers, the wind's low minstrelsy;
For all the tropic greenery is haunted
By you and me.

The tall palms bend and catch love's tender ditty
To learn a sweeter song to lure their mate.
The soft wind sighs in amorous self-pity,
Having no love wherein to laugh elate,
And turns to the cold harbour and the city,
Wailing its fate. {75B}

Two faces and two bosoms, breathing slowly
In tune and time with the sea's hymn below,
Breathing in peace of love, mighty and holy,
Fearing to fuse, and longing -- be it so!
And the world's pulse stops, as God bends him lowly

To hear and know.

For not the heights of heaven shall exalt her
Whose heart is full of love's dumb deity,
Nor harp-strings lift me, nor the sound of psalter,
Whose love is merged and molten into thee,

Nor incense sweeter be by shrine or altar
For you and me.

But like dove's eyes where glamour lies a-dwelling,
Like sweet well-water rising in the well,
Strong steep black currents thrust up, flooding, welling,
Into the moonlight, swift, adorable, --
So kisses cluster, so our bosoms swelling
Abide and dwell.

Yet the twin faces, like Madonnas, meeting,
Fear and draw back and gaze a little space;
Fear, lest they lose the moonlight frail and fleeting,
Lose their own beauty in their own embrace,
But feel how gladdening hearts and bosoms beating
Kindle the face.

But not for long shall lilies strive with roses,
Nor fear be fearful, nor delight repose,
Nor love retire; the woodland cleaves and close
Round heads an aureole hides, a rainbow shows.
A swifter shape of fire cleaves us, encloses
Rosebud and rose. {76A}

Mouth unto mouth! O fairest! Mutely lying,
Fire lambent laid on water, -- O! the pain!
Kiss me, O heart, as if we both were dying!
Kiss, as we could not ever kiss again!
Kiss me, between the music of our sighing,
Lightning and rain!

Not only as the kiss of tender lovers --
Let mingle also the sun's kiss to sea,
Also the wind's kiss to the bird that hovers,
The flower's kiss to the earth's deep greenery.
All elemental love closes and covers
Both you and me.

All shapes of silence and of sound and seeing,
All lives of Nature molten into this,
The moonlight waking and the shadows fleeing,
Strange sorcery of unimagined bliss,
All breath breathing in ours; mingled all being
Into the kiss.

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

"The ship is in her trim; the merry wind
Blows fair from land."
"Comedy of Errors."

QUITE careless whether golden gales of wind
Fling our boat forward, or the storm and spark
Of lightning lamp or shroud us in the dark,
Careless if ever land again we find,
Careless of all things (this love being blind),
We put to sea. O gladly stand and mark
The diamond headland fall behind our barque,
Wrapped in shrine-shadow of love's central mind!

We are alone to-day on the strange sea,
Divider of the dawn's divinity
From sunset's splendour: our eternal noon {76B}
Of love reck's little of eternity --
And though the moon is dying, ourselves may swoon,
One deathless shape of the large-breasted moon.

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

"But I perceive in you so excellent a touch of modesty that you will not
extort from me what I am willing to keep in."
"Twelfth-Night."

A CURIOUS conflict this of love and fear,
Honour and lust, and truth and trust beguiled;
One in the semblance of a rose-bright child: --
The other in a shape more gross and clear,
A fiercer woman-figure crowned severe

With garlands woven of scourges, but whose wild
Breast beat with splendour of sin, whose looks were mild,
Hiding the cruel smile behind a tear.

So she: "I now you never would;" yet did
Such acts that no end otherwise might be.
So I: "I will not ever pluck the flower;"
Yet strayed enchanted on the lawns forbid,

And bathed enamoured in the secret sea,
Both knowing our words were spoken -- for an hour.

THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

"Persever in that clear way thou goest,
And the gods strengthen thee."
"Pericles."

LINKED in the tiny shelf upon the ship,
My blind eyes burned into her mild ones: limbs
Twined to each other while fine dew bedims
Their quivering skins: lip fastened unto lip: {77A}
Whole soul and body frenzied meet and clip;
And the breath staggers, and the life-blood swims!
Terrible gods chant black demoniac hymns
As the frail cords of honour strain and slip.

For in the midst of that tremendous tide
The mighty vigour of a god was mine!
Drunk with desire, her lamentations died.
The dove gave place a moment to the swine!
Rapturous draughts of madness! Out she sighed
Uttermost life's love, and became a bride.

THE THIRTIETH DAY.

"For god's sake, lords, convey my tristful Queen,
For tears do stop the floodgates of her eyes."
"King Henry IV."

BITTER reproaches passed between us twain,
Hers real, mine with sneering logic sewn

Proving my trespass hardly half her own,
Its cause; I proved her how she made me fain
And left me mad, and led through joy and pain
To that unthinkable thing: I might atone
No whit in this way: then that stubborn stone
My heart grew tears: we were good friends again.

Therefore at night I added nothing new:
Only a little while I lay with her

And with mere kisses sucked her soul away,
And made my banquet of immortal dew,
Demanding nothing but to minister
To her desire until the dawn grew grey. {77B}

THE DAY WITHOUT A NUMBER.

"O never shall the sun that morrow see."
"Macbeth."

WE lost a day! <<1>> Nor kisses, nor regret,
Nor fear, nor pain, nor anything at all!
The day was lost, vanished past recall,
That saw no sunrise, never saw sun set --
For East and West invisibly were met
In gateways neither glad nor musical
Nor melancholy nor funereal.
Nought is there to remember nor forget.

<<1. On the westward voyage across the Pacific a day is "lost" on the 180th degree.>>

Yet in my westward journey many hours
I stole, and now must pay them back again.
I plucked not one flower, but an hundred flowers;
I bore an hundred passions in my brain --
King solomon had three hundred paramours.
I quite agree that everything is vain.

THE THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

"You whoreson villain! will you let it fall?"

"Taming of the Shrew."

THE inexpiable fate whose shuddering wing
Fear fled from, changed the native deed of sin
Into a spasmic kiss too salt and keen,
Windless, that ended with a sterile sting
The earlier hour whose heart was full of spring;
And the large love grew piteously lean;
Dreadful, like death; withdrawn and epicene
At the mad crisis of the eventful thing.

O that such tender fondness like a flower's
Should take such nameless infamy! That we
Should pluck such bitter bloom, rooted in fear, {78A}
Salt with the scurf of some diseased sea,
Foul with the curse of God: that we are here,
Hating the night's inexorable hours.

THE THIRTY-SECOND DAY.

"Me of my lawful pleasure she restrained
And prayed me oft forbearance."
"Cymbeline."

HOW sweet the soft looks shot, endearing shame
With their warm fragrance of love's modest eyes!
The secret knowledge of our secrecies
Shone from their distance with a subtle flame,
And gave to pudency a rosier name
When the long lashes drooped, and saintlier sighs
Took softer meanings, till my arteries
Throbbled with the glad desire that went and came.

"I charge you in the very name of love."
Quoth she: "We have all day to steal below
And snatch short kisses out of danger's throat.
Why beg you night: is not the day enough?"
But I: "The night is panting and aglow
to feel our hair distraught and limbs afloat."

THE THIRTY-THIRD DAY.

"Clubs, clubs! These lovers will not keep the peace."
"Titus Andronicus."

NATHLESS she locked her cabin-door to me.
All lovers guess the piteous night I passed --
Shuddering phantoms, hideous and aghast,
Loomed, lust of hate! toward me: how did she? {78B}
She never told: but I might surely see
In the drawn face and haggard eyes what vast
Voices of misery had held her fast,

And made her curse her own lock's cruelty.

So by her beauty and my love we swore,
And by the light within mine eyes, by her
Sweet shame: that never so we sunder again.
But she: "You swear 'by thy bright face' in vain;
'By thy sweet self' you grow a perjurer;
Who have shamed my face and made me but an whore."

THE THIRTY-FOURTH DAY.

"'Ben.' Stop there, stop there.
'Mer.' Thou desirest me to stop in my tale against the hair."
"Romeo and Juliet."

SWEET are the swift hard struggles ere the kiss,
When the frail body blushes into tears,
And short breaths cancel the long sighs, and fears
Constrain delight, until their import is
Made foolish when the struggle's synthesis
Leads to hot armistice, as dewy spheres
Glow, and increase the fury that reveres
No God, no heaven but its own hell's bliss.

So after desperate shifts of modesty
We could no more; loosened and lax we lay
Breathing and holding: then in amorous play
She laughed and left her body's love to me,
And kissed one kiss holding the heart of May,
And kissed again, and kissed our lives away. {79A}

THE THIRTY-FIFTH DAY.

"I cannot kiss, that is the humour of it, but adieu."
"King Henry V."

THE third time bitterly came reason back.
Is it a fault in love when mornings find
The soul grown sober and rethroned the mind?
Or is it mere necessity to track
The candid chequer cross-wise to the black,
And love, not mutable, yet well inclined

To take his pleasure in becoming blind
After such sight mere day is wont to lack?

So we were angry with ourselves and said
We would not kiss -- two days, and we would part.
And she prayed heaven that she might be dead,
And I cursed heaven and my foolish head.
I strove to turn towards old shapes of Art;
She, to some phantom faded from her heart.

THE THIRTY-SIXTH DAY.

"'Twas not their infirmity,
It was married chastity."
"Phoenix and Turtle."

YET ere the stars paled slowly in the east
I could not sleep: and she -- how else? What rest
May a man know until his quiet breast
Beats to her tune? I garbed me as a priest
And moved towards my Host -- on God I feast!
We lay in naked chastity, caressed
Child-like or dreaming, till the dawn repressed
Our sighs: that nuptial yet hath never ceased. {79B}

That was the best: far sundered by the tide
Dolorous, endless as Oceanus,<<1>>
A serpent-river girdling the large earth,
Still in that pure embrace we bring to birth
A thousand pleasant children born of us,

Sacred and sinless, if unsanctified.

<<1. The imaginary river of the Ancients, which formed the circumference of the world-disk.>>

LETHE.

WE have forgotten all the days of fear,
The nights of torment when the kiss expired,
Lost upon lips with love not overtired,
But fearing many things -- the after year,
The end, the man -- O no, not him! the tear,

The children's sorrow, and our own shame fired
Not less in doing all that love desired:
We have forgotten, surely -- being here!

We have forgotten every shape of sorrow,
Knowing no end to one night's ecstasy
In the night's kiss from morning that we borrow,
From the hard usurer, Eternity --
Seeing we have it in our power to die
Before the new kiss kindle for the morrow.

THE THIRTY-SEVENTH DAY.

"By long and vehement suit I was seduced
To make room for him in my husband's bed."
"King John."

MORTALS are not for nectar all the time:
Ambrosia feeds not men; nepenthe's sip
Is only for a moment: then we dip
Back to the earth and leave the bed sublime, {80A}
And tune our kisses to a terrene rhymne.
So, once again before we left the ship
With right good will our bodies cling and slip,
And the life's flame sinks as the kisses climb.

There never has been such a supreme kiss
Since heaven and earth began to be as this!
Doubt nothing of it! yet our spirits knew

Its savour was as roses fallen to dust:
Our proper food was of Selenian dew,
And love without a battle conquered lust.

THE THIRTY-EIGHTH DAY.

"The carcass of a beauty spent and done."
"Lover's Complaint."

ONE day from landing. Kamakura sees
Pass to the might shrine and shape of bronze<<1>>
Me, pilgrim, murmuring pious orisons,
Taking my refuge in that House of Peace,

And after, sees my love, and doth not please.
She was too young to know that shrine the Son's,
Or see the Virgin's House in Kwan-se-on's;<<2>>
And when I told her, flushed, and bade me cease.

<<1. The Dai-Butsu, a vast statue of Buddha.>>
<<2. The Goddess. Her function is variously identified with that of Isis,
Bhavani, or the Kundalini.>>

I ceased indeed! All hope of mental flower
She shattered in five minutes: following lust,
All intellectual communing did pass,
And all respect of mind: but love's high tower,
Stricken of lightning, stood: not fallen in dust,
Beautiful fragments as of a Greek vase. {80B}

THE THIRTY-NINTH DAY.

"Had I not eyes but ears, my ears would love
That inward beauty and invisible."
"Venus and Adonis."

NOTE from this day no possible event.
All secrets told, and all desires fulfilled
Primitive passion of our soul have killed.
We dwell within a calmer element
Perfectly pure and perfectly content.
The subtler splendour of our love has stilled

Those sombre glories that it never meant.

Fire only is our substance; there we dwell,
The Salamandrine with the Salamander.
No fuel to crack, no water to make tunes,
No air to blow us hither and thither; well!
At our own will through cosmic space we wander
Alive, the sun's beam mixing with the moon's.

THE FORTIETH DAY.

"Away, you rascally Althea's dream, away!"
"2 King Henry IV."

MERE terror struck into our souls, one shaft
Sudden and swift; our punishment was here.
The shapeless form of an avenging fear
Shuddered within her; from the deep rich draught
Of lively labour that her nights had quaffed
Rises a serpent: prescience of next year,
The springtide; may the Minotaur<<1>> appear,
Prodigious offspring of the fatal graft? {81A}

<<1. The offspring of Europa and of Jupiter under the form of a bull.>>

The worst has happened. Time must now discover
What love had hidden from the wittol's<<1>> eyes
(What hate may tell him if he read my song,
If he be subtle: not if he be wise).
In our despair came laughter to my lover:
"All's well as yet. I calculated wrong."

<<1. Cuckold.>>

THE FORTY-FIRST DAY.

"I am sick."
"Antony and Cleopatra."

HOW things are changed since Alice was so ill!
I, being in high fever, lay in bed,

While my love smoothed the pillows for my head:
Her calm looks christened me with dew to still
All chance of fever to the soul, and fill
My heart with pure love like a snowfall shed
Meekly, a blossom where frail white and red
Were never frenzied at some mad god's will.

She sat and gazed upon me all day long.
Sometimes she held my hands; then she would weep,
And then stoop tenderly and kiss my lips,
Or lull me with some chaste and gentle song
Of angel love. Night's plume its dew fall drips
As she still sits and watches me to sleep. {81B}

THE FORTY-SECOND DAY.

"'Pol.' No longer stay.
'Leon.' One seven-night longer.
'Pol.' Very sooth, to-morrow."
"Winter's Tale."

I COULD not let her leave me the day after.
Also we "must" wait till the month decide
Whether the mother stood behind the bride.
In any other case what love and laughter
Such tidings of an angel's birth would waft her;
Now, what a fear! And so she would abide
Another vessel and another tide,
Until we held the key of the hereafter.

But this sad spectre could not change our calm.
The day went by more peaceful than a dream
Dreamt by a maiden in pure winds of balm;
Love's sweet still music like a far-off psalm
Thrilled our quiet pulses: with the intent supreme:
"This one week more a century shall seem."

AT LAST.

O TEARLESS sorrow of long years, depart!
O joy of minutes that be ages long,

Come! Let the choral pulse and strength of song
Quicken, and the fire of lute and lyre dart,
An arrow red with blood and bright with art,
And cover all the fiery bloom of wrong
With blossoms blacker where the blood runs strong
As our lips pale, their life fled to the heart.

Surely we are as dead, we loving so,
So bitterly, so keenly: let no breath
Persuade us we are living and must die! {82A}
Better believe eternal kisses flow
Under the strong rude current miscalled death,
The lotus-river where our bodies lie!

THE FORTY-THIRD DAY.

"O theft most base
That we have stolen what we do fear to keep."
"Troilus and Cressida."

IMPOSSIBLE that we shall ever part!
The heart shrinks back from thinking it, the mind
Hates it, and prays as love is to be blind.
Yet we know well that no magician's art
Can keep our two selves near their single heart.
Self-mocked I urge her "Come and leave behind
All fear and friends and children: we shall find
Love risen sole without a counterpart."

Even while I begged her, I well knew she must.
We could not, loving to see her children laugh,
Let cowards twit them with their mother's lust.
Even our own purity confirmed the trust.
How long, O lord, how long? Too long by half
Till men read, wondering, wedlock's epitaph.

THE FORTY-FOURTH DAY.

"lips, O you
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss
A dateless bargain to engrossing death."

"Romeo and Juliet."

SLEEP, O deep splendour of disastrous years,
Gone like a star fallen at the fall of night!
Wake, O mute mouth and majesty of light,
Made of no sound that even silence hears, {82B}
But born of strings intangible, of spheres
Shaken of love, a mightier music's might
Frailer to sound than dewfall is to sight!
Wake, O sweet soul incorporate of tears!

Or else dream on and let no tears begem
Love's crown of thorns, ensanguine diadem,
But let pale kisses blossom, starry shrine
Of lips most deathlike, that endure divine
Past sleep's, or parting's, or death's spoil of them
In the pomegranate walks of Proserpine! <<1>>

<<1. Proserpine, ravished by Hades, was sought by her mother Demeter.
But as she had eaten (a pomegranate) in Hell, Hades retained a claim upon
her for half the year. See Forty-eighth Day.>>

THE FORTY-FIFTH DAY.

"Peace, fool! I have not done."
"Troilus and Cressida."

THOU knowest, O love, how tired our bodies grow
Forgotten in quick converse, love to love;
How the flame flickers of the ghost above,
The spirit's kiss; the sleepless to-and-fro
Movement of love's desire too strong to know
Or care for that it takes its substance of --
As if life's burden were not drear enough
Or death's deliverance not so far and slow.

Our bodies almost perish, with one thought
Crowned and completed, consecrate and shrined:
A perfect temple of fine amber wrought,
Whose shrine's the body and whose lamp the mind.
The heart is priest and sacrifice in one;
And, where it sinned or sorrowed, shall atone. {83A}

THE FORTY-SIXTH DAY.

"Because I love you, I will let you know:
..... my wife
... like a fountain with a hundred spouts
Did run pure blood."
"Julius Caesar."

WAS it a sense of uttermost relief
We gladdened with, and bade our fears forget?
Was there no subtle fragrance of regret?
For me, at least, a pang of perfect grief?
Had it been otherwise, I would be chief
And drive her to abandon all things yet
In mere despair, that by-and-by shall get
Young comfort in a babe beyond belief.

God would not curse and bless us to such measure;
We were not sad enough nor glad enough!
A little time of misery and pleasure;
Pain strangling half the ecstasy thereof --
Such all our gain, who gained the utmost treasure,
Gift of the wizard wand and cup of love.

THE FORTY-SEVENTH DAY.

"Thou ever young, fresh, lov'd, and delicate wooer."
"Timon of Athens."

THE little money that we had to spend
Was gone long since: the little more I stole
Followed: I pledged than all things but my soul
(On which the usurers refused to lend)
To raise our utmost, till a ship should send
Much plenty from the Sunset: to control
And stop her yet a little while, the whole
I meant to waste before the week should end. {83B}

Thus we went Northward to the capital,
Desolate huts and ways funereal,

An hateful town; earthquake and heat and rain
Made the place wretched, did not love enchain
There even as here: what mattered aught at all
While love was hovering and our lips were fain?

THE FORTH-EIGHTH DAY.

"Let us return
And strain what other means is left to us
In our dear peril."
"Timon of Athens."

OUR love takes on a tinge of melancholy,
The six months glory of life past on earth
About to yield to Hades' bridal birth,
The world's sad sympathy with Persephone.
Yet I myself, while tuning to her key
My sighs of sorrow, mused in secret mirth:
"I am convinced at last of money's worth,

For lack of which she cannot cross the sea."

I told her, like a fool, a day too soon.
She went and told her story to the priest;
She wept, and borrowed money of the beast.
She told me she would go: June fell from June.
I, left in limbo; she, to front the elate
Cockoldy lawyer in the Lone Star State.

THE FORTY-NINTH DAY.

"Let me twine
Mine arms about that body.
"Coriolanus."

I STOLE her money, even then to prove
She had no wings to fly with: but I knew
What to her hateful duty there was due,
And how the hateful system stank thereof: {84A}
I let her go, both weeping, both enough
Heart-broken: no farewell went ever through --
Words came not: only ever: "I love you!"

With broken kisses and stained cheeks of love.

So all day long and half the night we wandered
Down deep lanes and in gardens, like lost souls.
Strong kisses that had surfeited a score
Of earthly bridals in an hour we squandered;
And tears like fire, and looks like burning coals,
Without a word passed on for evermore.

THE FIFTIETH DAY.

"Suffolk." "If I depart from thee I cannot live."
"Margaret." "let me hear from thee,
For whereso'er thou art in this world's globe
I have an Iris that shall find thee out."
"2 King Henry VI."

I.

AT noon she sailed for home, a weeping bride
Widowed before the honeymoon was done.
Always before the rising of the sun
I swore to come in spirit to her side
And lie like love; and she at eventide
Swore to seek me and gather one by one
The threads of labyrinthine love new spun,
Cretan<<1>> for monstrous shadows serpent-eyed.

<<1. The reference is still to the Minotaur, who dwelt in a labyrinth in Crete.>>

So the last kiss passed like a poison-pain,
Knowing we might not ever kiss again.
Mad tears fell fast: "Next year!" in cruel distress {84B}
We sobbed, and stretched our arms out, and despaired,
And -- parted. Out the brute-side of truth flared;
"Thank God I've finished with that foolishness!"

II.

AH! there be two sides to all shapes of truth!
I might indeed go back to bitter toil,
Prune the mind's vine, and gather in the spoil
Rough-conquered from books, men, fields, without ruth
Pillaging Nature, pawning strength and youth
For some strange guerdon (or its counter-foil)
Gainless or not-to-be-gained, priestly or royal,
Profane, canaille -- I know not, in good sooth!

I might do this: or else I might repose
Wrapped in the urned leaves of my love's blown rose,
Seek her in spirit, and commune, and wait
Her freedom and the rapture to enclose
In my own house her beauty intimate.
I am a fool, tossing a coin with fate.

III.

Is love indeed eternal? Otherwise
Is evolution an eternal plan?
Must I move upward in the stream of Man,

God-ward: my life as Christ to sacrifice, {85A}
As Buddha to repress: to grow so wise,
Space, time shall lie within my finger-span?
I know not which I wish: either I can;
Not both, unless all meditation lies.

I am not sure: if love as great as ours
May not be God to part of us at least,
Leaving the rest to find its heights and powers
In other spheres; that, night's enamoured priest;
This, on the lake the dewy lotus-flowers
That lift their jewelled hearts toward the East.

AFTER.

NOW, when the sun falls in the dismal sky
And no light leaps beneath the plunging prow,
I know the fulness of my sorrow now: --
That all my talk and laughter was a lie;
That as each hour widens the gulfs that sigh

Between us; the truth scores upon my brow
Sigils of silence, burns in me the vow
"I love you, and shall love you till it die."

Whether next year, as fondly we made oath,
Shall see us meet at least, whether as wife
I shall at last gather the whole vow's breath --
Not heaven nor hell shall break our solemn troth.
I love you, and shall love you all my life,
I love you, and shall love you after death. {85B}

{full page below}}

THE ARGONAUTS<<1>>

1904 {columns commence}

<<1. This play, written when Crowley was studying Hindu religion, derives much of its colour and philosophical import from Pataiyali, the Upanishads and Sankarachariya's commentary, Shaivite mysticism, the Bhagavat Purana, Bhagavat Gita, and Vedantist literature in general.>>

ARGONAUTAE.

"ACTUS PRIMUS."

JASON.

PELIAS. JASON. "Semi-chorus of Iochian" Men. "Semi-chorus of Iolchian" Women.

SCENE: "The Throne-chamber of" KING PELIAS.

SEMI-CHORUS OF MEN.

THE prophecies are spoken in vain,
The auguries vainly cast,
Since twenty years of joyous reign

In peace are overpast;
And those who cursed our King's desires
Are branded in the brow for liars.

SEMI-CHORUS OF WOMEN.

We heard the aged prophet speak
The doom of woe and fear.
We wait with blanched and icy cheek
The one-and-twentieth year:
For Justice lies, as seeds lie, dead,
But lifts at last a Gorgon head!

MEN.

What fear can reach our Thessaly?
What war disturb our peace?
Long stablished is young amity
Maid-blushing over Greece:
And fair Iolchus stands sublime,
A monument to lesson time. {86A}

WOMEN.

But if such fear were come indeed,
Who reads the riddle dread

Spoken in frenzy by the seer
Against the royal head?
We know the Rhyme's involving spell --
Its purport? Irresolvable!

MEN.

We heard his foolish maundering:
But, bred in wiser ways,
We have forgotten: do ye sing
The rune of ancient days!
To-day his curse cacophonous
Shall earn at least a laugh from us!

WOMEN.

"O! when the armed hand is nigh,
Iolchus shall not see
Peace shining from Athena's sky
Until the Fleece be free;
Until the God of War shall scorn
The sting, and trust him to the horn.

"Until the Sun of Spring forsake
His eastern home, and rise
Within our temple-walls and make
One glory of the skies --
Until the King shall die and live,
Athena never shall forgive."

MEN.
Surely, O friends, at last 'tis clear
The man was mad indeed!
Such nonsense we did never hear
As this prophetic screed!
More, as 'tis never like this land
Should ever see an armed hand. {86B}

JASON.
Where is the son of Tyro and Poseidon?

MEN.
Iolchus' King has here a dwelling-place.

WOMEN.
See you the sword shake -- and the iron hand
Not shaking? The man's mood is full of wrath.

MEN.
Peace, foolish! Were it so, we would not see.

WOMEN.
Ay me! this stranger seems most ominous.

JASON.
Where is the son of Tyro and Poseidon?

MEN.
This is the Palace-place of Pelias,
Son of Poseidon, Of Iolchus King.

JASON.
Iolchus' King is here, in very truth.
Where is the son of Tyro?

MEN.
Who art thou?

JASON.
Know me for Jason and great Aeson's heir.

MEN.
We learn good news, most enviable sir;
That Aeson hath such grand inheritance.

JASON.
You have grown fat beneath an evil rule.
Your period is at hand. Go, one of you,
And drag the impious wretch before my sight!

MEN.
Aeson? Thy father? {87A}

JASON.
Play not with my wrath!
My mood is something dangerous.

MEN.
Dangerous sir,
I go indeed, to bring some danger more

Hither.

JASON.
Poltroonery dislikes the wise.
Fair maidens, I salute you pleasantly.

WOMEN.
Welcome, O welcome to the land,
Young heir of prophecy!
The armed hand, the glittering brand,
The scabbard's jewellery!
That wealth avails not: cast it down!
The sword alone may win the crown!

JASON.
Ye languish wretched in the tyrant's rule?

WOMEN.

Most happy are we, King. But change is sweet.

JASON.

A short-lived omen of success to me.

WOMEN.

Nay, but adventure and the prophecy!

JASON.

I see I have but small support in you.

WOMEN.

Not so, great Jason! Had I suffered much,
My spirit had been broken to the scourge.
Now, being strong and happy, with what joy
I cry: Evohe! Revolution!
I have grown weary of this tiresome peace.

JASON.

I promise you intense unhappiness. {87B}

WOMEN.

Here is the ugly monster! Out! To think
We once believed him reverend and refined,
Saw majesty in all that tottering gait,
And honour in the goat-like beard of him!

FIRST WOMAN.

A week ago your blue eyes were in tears,
Sidelong regarding the old montebank.

SECOND WOMAN.

To-day I would not be his concubine
For all Iolchus -- for all Thessaly!

THIRD WOMAN.

I see the same glance seek out Jason now.

SECOND WOMAN.

Ay, there's a man! What muscles! What fine fire
In the quick eye! What vigour and warm strength!

FIRST WOMAN.

Yes, in your wishes. But indeed he is
A proper man. Away, you ancient egg!

PELIAS.

With what audacious foot and impious voice
Strides this young man and talks? Let him advance,
Trembling at our offended majesty.
Who art thou whose rude summons startles us
From work of state to listen a young mouth
Beardless? Speak, man, for shortly thou shalt die.

JASON.

Athena speaks.

WOMEN.

Ah, there's a fine retort!

PELIAS.

Goddesses speak and men list reverently.
Could he not find a fitter messenger? {88A}

JASON.

Her cause is Jason's. Jason therefore speaks.

PELIAS.

Aha! A suppliant to our clemency!
I did mistake the gesture and the sword

Angrily gripped, the foot flung terribly
Foremost, the fierce, constrained attitude.
But -- as a suppliant! Tell thy woeful tale,
Sad youth! Some woman thou hast loved and lost?

JASON.

Thou hast robbed me of this kingdom. Thou hast kept
My father (poor half-witted man!) a slave
And parasite about thy court (one grief
The more I add to this account of thine!)
Myself a babe thou didst seek out to slay,
And, I being hid, with fish-hooks bent with lies
And gilded with most spacious promises,
Cunningly angled for old Chiron's<<1>> grace
To catch me yet. Athena hears me swear
To right all this -- nay, answer me before

Anger get all the spoil of me, and drink
Thy life-blood in one gulp! Descend that dais!
Bend thou a suppliant at my awful knee,
And thus -- perhaps -- at least get grace of life.

<<1. A Centaur who hid the child Jason.>>

PELIAS.
And if I say I will not yield the throne?

JASON.
I am of force to take it.

PELIAS.
Are my friends
Not faithful? Who draws sword for Pelias?

MEN.
Shall we not slay thee this presumptuous fool? {88B}

JASON.
I am of force, I say. I wrestled once
From sunrise to sunset with Heracles,
Great Heracles! Not till the full moon rose
Availed his might to lay me prone. Beware!
Ye weakling knaves! I am of force, I say.

PELIAS.
Rebellious youth, the justice of thy cause
And force I will admit -- where force goes far.
But think'st thou wait no wild Erinyes
For thee a guest in these my halls, for thee
Whose hands are dipped not yet in blood so deep
As to have murdered an old man, and him
Thy father's brother?

JASON.
Justice covers all.
The Furies cannot follow if a man
To his own heart be reconciled. They feed
On his own bosom, nay! are born thereof.
An alien clan he might elude, but these,
Blood of his blood, he shall nor slay nor 'scape.

My heart hath never pastured on regret
Or pang for thee. My justice covers all.

PELIAS.

That one word "justice" covers all indeed
To thine own self. But think'st thou for a word
To ruin many years of commonweal,
And poison in an hour the politics
Of states and thrones for -- justice? Thou art just;
But wisdom, but the life of innocents,
The happiness of all, are better served
By solemn thought an weighty counsel held.

JASON.

This is more simple. I abolish thee --
One sword-sweep -- and assume thy "politics." {89A}

PELIAS.

Thou art this "simple"! Will my liege allies
(Willing with age and wisdom to accord)
Not tremble at thy firebrand breed, not think
Who hath in blood, an old man's blood, made fast
A perilous footing, may betimes discover
More "justice" -- and invasion footing it
Hard after? Wilt thou plunge all Thessaly,
All Greece, in haste and sudden armament,
Fury of thought and frenzy of deed, at once
For justice? Wouldst thou be so violent
For justice, save in thine own cause, O boy?

And wilt thou pity not the happy days
And storm-unshattered abodes of Greece?

JASON.

Athena, who is Justice, also is
Wisdom: and also "She who buildeth towns."

PELIAS.

Think also, I am born of deity.
I am inured to majesty; I know
How venerable is the sight of Kings,
And how the serpent Treason writhes beneath
The royal foot, conscious of its own shame,
And how the lion of Rebellion cowers

Before the presence of a king unarmed,
Quelled by one mild glance of authority.

JASON.

A king unjust is shorn of majesty.

PELIAS.

Still the one fool's word -- justice -- answers all.
Would thou wert older and more politic!

JASON.

Would I were liar with thine own foul brand!
The gods are weary of thy cozening. {89B}

PELIAS.

To proof, then, boy. I lay my sceptre by,
Put off my crown, descend the steps to thee.
Here is my breast. Look firmly in my face,
And slay me. Is there fear writ large and deep
In mine old eyes? Or shudderest thou with fear?

JASON.

More hate than fear. In sooth, I cannot strike.

PELIAS.

A king is not so slain -- except a madman
May fall upon him with averted head.<<1>>
Indeed, I conquer. ["Aside."] Even so, beware!
Victory ill-nurtured breeds the babe defeat.
["Aloud."] Listen, my brother's son! Nay, stoop not so,

Bending ashamed brows upon the earth!
I am well weary of the world of men.
I grow both old and hateful to myself,
Most on the throne: power which to youth is sweet
To age looks fearful. Also I have wept --
Alas! how often! -- and repented me
Of those unkingly deeds whereby I gained
This throne whose joy is turned to bitterness.
I will make peace with thee, and justice still
Shall have a home and shrine in Thessaly.
Be patient notwithstanding! Prove thyself
Valiant and wise -- and reign here! If in sooth
An aged counsellor, whose reverend hair

Commands a hearing, may assist at all,
Wisdom to wisdom added, I am here.
Yet would I rather slide into my grave,
Untroubled with the destinies of states,
Even of such an one so dear to me
Who thus a score of years have nurtured it. {90A)

<<1. These two lines are directly taken from Eliphaz Levi.>>

JASON.

I hear thee. Thou art grown like royal wine
Better with age. Forgive my violence!

PELIAS.

["Aside."] The fish bites hard. ["Aloud."] There is a prophecy:
"Once stirred, Iolchus never shall know peace
Till in its temple hangs the Golden Fleece."
Now thou hast so disquieted our days,
The time is come: seek thou Aea's<<1>> isle,
And hang this trophy on our temple walls!

<<1. Colchis, a county of Asia, bounded on the W. by the Euxine, on the N.
by the Caucasus, and on the E. by the Iberia. Distinguished for Aeaea.>>

JASON.

Tell me what is this fleece.

PELIAS.

Let women sing.

WOMEN.

In Ares' grove, the sworded trees,
The world's heart wondering,
Hangs evermore the Golden Fleece,<<1>>
The glory of the spring,
The light of far Aea's coast.
Such glamour as befits a ghost.

<<1. The symbolism of the Fleece and its guardians is curious. The Fleece is
of (Aries) Ares the Ram, the sign of the spring. The sun being exalted in this
sign, the fleece is called golden. Ares or Mars (Mars) is in Astrology the ruler
of this sign. His other house is Scorpio (Scorpio) the Dragon. The whole
legend is thus a glyph of the Magnum Opus. That Crowley neglects this is a

significant mark of the change to his maturer manner.>>

Before that glittering woof the Sun
Shrinks back abashed in shame,
The splendour of the shining one,
One torrent-fleece of flame!
What heart may think, what tongue may sing
The glory of the golden thing? {90B}

About the grove the scorpion coils
Inextricably wind
Within the wood's exceeding toils,
The shadow hot and blind;
There lurk his serpent sorceries,
The guardian of the Golden Fleece.

The dragon lifts his nostrils wide
And jets a spout of fire;
The warrior questing turns aside,
Not daring to desire;
And Madness born of Ares lurks
Behind the wonder of his works.

Be sure that were the woodland way
Tracked snakewise to the core,
The dragon slain or driven away,
The good Fleece won by war,
Not yet should Ares sink his spear,
Or fail of flinging forth a fear.

The torch of Madness should be lit,
And follow him afar:

Upon his prow should Madness sit,
A baleful beacon-star;
And in his home Despair and strife
Lie in his bosom for a wife!

But oh, the glory of the quest,
The gainless goodly prize!
The fairest form man e'er caressed,
The word he heard most wise; --
All lures of life avoid and cease
Before the winning of the Fleece!

O nameless splendour of the Gods,
Begotten hardly of Heaven!
Unspoken treasure of the abodes
Beyond the lightning levin!
No misery, no despair may pay
The joy to hold thee for a day!

JASON.
Athena's servant recks not much of Ares.

PELIAS.
Are thine eyes kindled at the golden thought? {91A}

JASON.
Mine eyes see farther than the Fleece of Gold.

PELIAS.
What heroes can attain so fair a thing?

JASON.
I have some friends who would esteem this quest
Lightly -- a maiden's pleasure-wandering
Through liliated fields a summer's afternoon.

PELIAS.
The Gods give strength! I pray them send thee back
Safe to this throne.

JASON.
I will not see thy face
Ever again until the quest be won.
Rule thou with justice in my sacred seat

Until I come again.

PELIAS.
The Gods thy speed.

MEN.
The hardy hero goes to find
The living Fleece of Gold;
Or else, some death may chance to bind
Those limbs of manly mould.

In sooth, I doubt if I shall earn
The singer's fee for his return.

PELIAS.

Think now -- I feared that fool. It must be true
That guilt is timorous. Ay! when danger's none!
Let but swords flash -- and guilt grows God for might!
Indeed I rule -- until he come again.
Ay, when the stars fall, Jason shall be king!

EXPLICIT ACTUS PRIMUS. {91B}

ARGONAUTAE.

"ACTUS SECUNDUS."

ARGO.

ARGUS "the son of" PHRIXUS, JASON, HERACLES, CASTOR, POLLUX,
THESEUS,
ORPHEUS. "Chorus of" Heroes. "Chorus of" Shipbuilders.

SCENE "An open place near Iolchus."

CHORUS OF SHIPBUILDERS.

THE sound of the hammer and steel!
The song of the level and line!
The whirr of the whistling wheel!
The ring of the axe on the pine!

The joy of the ended labour,
As the good ship plunges free
By sound of pipe and tabor

To front the sparkling sea!

The mystery-woven spell!
The voyage of golden gain!
The free full sails that swell
On the swell of the splendid main!

The song of the axe and the wedge!
The clang of the hammer and chain!

Keen whistle of chisel and edge!
Smooth swish of the sliding plane!

Hail to the honour of toil!
Hail! to the ship flown free!
Hail! to the golden spoil,
And the glamour of all the sea!

HERACLES.

A good stout song, friend Argus, matching well
The mighty blows thou strikest: yet methinks
One blow should serve to drive yon nail well home
Where thou with tenfold stroke -- {92A}

THESEUS.

Good Heracles!
Not all men owe thy strength ---

ARGUS.

Nay, let him try!
Take my toy hammer!

HERACLES.

I have split the wood!

THESEUS.

Vexation sits tremendous on his brow.
Beware a hero's fury! Thou art mad,
Argus, to play so dangerous a trick.

ARGUS.

True, Theseus -- if he had but hit his thumb!

CASTOR.

Cease this fool's talk. The moon waits not the work.

POLLUX.

The sun will sink no later for your pleasure.
on to thy work, man.

THESEUS.

He that traps a lion
And baits him for an hour, and lets him go,

Does well to think before he tempt again
The forest paths.

HERACLES.

The wise man wisely thinks
That nothing is but wisdom -- and myself
Think strongly that no other thing exists
But strength: so with his subtleties of mind
He baffles me; and I lift up my club,
And with one blow bespatter his wise brains.

JASON.

Ay, not for nothing did the darkness reign
Those eight-and-forty hours, <<1>> O Zeus-begot!{92B}

<<1. Zeus caused a night to extend to this length, that he might efficiently
beget Hercules.>>

THESEUS.

Tell me, friend master, how the work goes on.
When shall our gallant vessel breast the deep?
When shall we see the sun sink o'er the poop,
And look toward moonrise, and the land be lost,
And the perched watcher on the mast behold
The melting mirror of the ocean meet
The crystallising concave of the sky?

ARGUS.

All this shall happen when the work is done.

JASON.

How many moons, friend fool, before that day?

ARGUS.

These things are known not even to the Gods,
Except the Father only.<<1>>

<<1. The satire is on Matthew xxiv. 36.>>

HERACLES.

Fools must talk,

ARGUS.

I talk, divulging nothing.

HERACLES.
I strike thee,
Yet act not.

ARGUS.
Hero, stay that heavy hand!
The ship shall sail ere spring.

THESEUS.
But now you talk
More as befits a workman to a king. {93A}

JASON.
Be gentle now, my friends! These shipbuilders,
Reared in the rugged borders of the North,<<1>>
Have northern manners; surly if attacked,
But genial when ---

<<1. Argus is wittily characterised as a Scottish shipbuilder.>>

ARGUS.
The proper treatment is
Kindness -- like lions whom Demeter tamed.

THESEUS.
I promise thee, the next time thou art wroth,
A second kindness from Alcides' hand.

ARGUS.
Spare me that, King, and take, thyself, a club.

JASON.
King Theseus, thou art far reputed wise.
Hast thou not learnt a lesson from the hap
Of Heracles supreme in -- shipbuilding?

I by my meekness will abash thy strength.
Good Argus, thou art unsurpassed in art
To curve the rougher timbers, to make smooth
The joints and girders, and to plane and work
The iron and the nailheads, and to lift
Row after row the tiers of benches thrice

In triple beauty, and to shape the oars,
To raise the mast ---

ARGUS.
Thy knowledge staggers me!
How wast thou thus instructed?

JASON.
By much thought.
To clamp the decks --- {93B}

ARGUS.
I stand with brows abashed.
Thou art the master -- build the ship thyself.

JASON.
Nay, but my knowledge is of mind alone.
I cannot so apply it as to build
An Argo.

ARGUS.
Yet I verily believe
Such mind must pierce far deeper than these names,
Seeking the very nature of the things
Thou namest thus so pat. Perchance to thee
These logs, nails, bolts, tools, have some life of sense,
Some subtle language. Tell us what they say!<<1>>

<<1. The gibe in these twenty lines is against Rudyard Kipling's silly vitalisation of machinery, and his ignorance even of the correct terms.>>

THESEUS.
'Tis but a giber -- leave the churl alone.

JASON.
Indeed I spake of things I knew not of.

ARGUS.
You speak more wisely when you float away
Into pure dream, and talk of mystic things
That no man born of woman understands,
And therefore does not dare to contradict.

JASON.

He who speaks much and bitterly at last
Lays himself open to retort. I think
I never heard such contradictions fly
As when men talk of gods -- that never were!

ARGUS.

Thou wouldst do better to leave man alone.
The wisest talk is folly when work waits.
Look! how these sturdy villains gape around,
Fling down their task, and hang upon the words
That flow like nectar from your majesty. {94A}

CASTOR.

In truth, my friend, if you would wear your crown
This side of Orcus, you should go away.

POLLUX.

Ay! let the men work! For a mind as yours
Is good, and skill as theirs is also good.

CASTOR.

But mix the manual and the mental -- well,
No ship was built by pure philosophy.

POLLUX.

Nor yet designed by artisans.

JASON.

Enough!
Come, great Alcides, it is time to go.

ARGUS.

A fool allows a moment's irritation
To move the purpose of a thousand years.
Go, go!

HERACLES.

Remember! We are met this day
To call upon the name with praise and prayer
Of great Athena, since our ship is built
With sculptured olive pregnant in the prow,

And all the length of pine is coiled and curled
With the swift serpent's beauty, and the owl
Sits in huge state upon the midmost bench.
Thus, therefore, by the manifest design,
Joining the wisdom to the power and will,
We build the Argo.

ARGUS.
What a heavy club
We carry! And how well becomes our figure
The lion's skin!

HERACLES.
Be still, thou art an ass! {94B}

ARGUS.
The fabled, ass, O Zeus-descended one?

HERACLES.
What ass?

ARGUS.
The one that wore the lion's skin!

THESEUS.
This fellow were beneath a man's contempt.
How should a God-born heed him?

JASON.
We are here,
Then, to invoke Athena, immolate
the sacred cock upon her altar-stone,
That She, who sprang in armour from the brain
Of the All-Father, may descend to bless
Our labours, since delay grows dangerous,
If haply by Her power and subtlety
She please to aid the work, and to perform
A prodigy to save us! Mighty Queen,
That art the balance and the sword alike
In cunning Argus' brain ---

HERACLES.
Ay! Mighty Wisdom,

Who thus can overshadow such a fool,
And make him capable to build a ship.

ARGUS.

O thou! Athena, whose bright wisdom shone
In this beef-witted fellow, making him
Competent even to sweep a stable out!
Glorious task! -- I shall return anon.

JASON.

Nay, follow not! The Goddess were displeased,
Coming, to find our greatest hero gone.

THESEUS.

This is the midmost hour of day. {95A}

JASON.

Arise,
All heroes, circling round the sacred stone
In beautiful order and procession grave,
While our chief priest, our mightiest in song,
The dowered of Phoebus, great Oeager's heir,
Invokes that glory on the sacrifice
That kindles all its slumber into life
And vivid flame descending on the wheel
And chariot of lightning, licking up
The water of the loud-resounding sea
Lustral, poured seven times upon the earth,
And in one flash consuming wood and stone
And the sweet savour of the sacrifice.

ORPHEUS.

But when the flame hath darted from the eye
Of my divine existence, and hath left
Nothing, where was the altar and the earth,
The water and the incense and the victim --
Nothing of all remains! Then look to it
That ye invoke not Wisdom by the Name
Of bright Athena!

JASON.

We are here to call
Upon that Wisdom by that mighty Name!

ORPHEUS.

Who calleth upon Wisdom is not wise.
Is it not written in the Sibyl's book<<1>>
That Wisdom crieth in the streets aloud
And none regardeth her? Obey my voice.

<<1. Actually Proverbs i, 20.>>

JASON.

O master of Apollo's lyre and light!
We are not wise -- and for that very cause
We meet to-day to call on Wisdom.

ORPHEUS.

Well!
The altar stands, shadowing the Universe
That with my fire of Knowledge I destroy --
And there is Wisdom -- but invoke Her not,
Friends, who is only when none other is. {95B}

JASON.

Let us begin: the hour draws on apace.
Drive off the demons from the sacrifice!

ORPHEUS.

Let all the demons enter and dwell therein!
My friends, ye are as ignorant as priests!
Let there be silence while the sleeper<<1>> wakes!

<<1. The Hindus hold that the Kundalini, the spring of spiritual power, lies coiled and sleeping upon a lotus-flower at the base of the spine. She may be aroused by various methods.>>

O coiled and constricted and chosen!
O tortured and twisted and twined!
Deep spring of my soul deep frozen,
The sleep of the truth of the mind!
As a bright snake curled
Round the vine of the World!

O sleeper through dawn and through daylight,

O sleeper through dusk and through night!

O shifted from white light to gray light,
From gray to the one black light!
O silence and sound
In the far profound!

O serpent of scales as an armour
To bind on the breast of a lord!
Not deaf to the Voice of the Charmer,
Not blind to the sweep of the sword!
I strike to the deep
That thou stir in thy sleep!

Rise up from mine innermost being!
Lift up the gemmed head to the heart!
Lift up till the eyes that were seeing
Be blind, and their life depart!
Till the eye that was blind<<1>>
Be a lamp to my mind! {96A}

<<1. The "third eye," that rudimentary eye called the pineal gland.>>

Coil fast all they coils on me, dying,
Absorbed in the sense of the Snake!
Stir, leave the flower-throne, and upflying
Hiss once, and hiss thrice, and awake!
Then crown me and cling!
Flash forward -- and spring!

Flash forth on the fire of the altar,
The stones, and the sacrifice shed;
Till the Three Worlds<<1>> flicker and falter,
And life and her love be dead!
In mysterious joy
Awake -- and destroy!

<<1. Of gods, men, and demons.>>

JASON.
It is enough!

HERACLES.
Too great for a god's strength!

THESEUS.
Speak!

CASTOR.
Change! Not to be borne!

POLLUX.
But this is death!

ORPHEUS.
Let the light fade. The oracle is past.

JASON.
The Voice is past. We are alive again.

ORPHEUS.
What spake That Silence?

HERACLES.
"This is not a quest
Where strength availeth aught." I shall not go. {96B}

JASON.
Nay, brother. The voice was: "The end is sorrow!"

THESEUS.
Ye heard not, O dull-witted! Unto me
(Alone of all ye wise) the great voice came,
"The Gates of Hell shall not in all prevail."

CASTOR.
I heard, "Regret not thy mortality!
Love conquers death!"

POLLUX.
But I, "Regret not thou
Thine immortality! Love conquers life!"<<1>>

<<1. Pollux being immortal, and Caster mortal, at the former's request Zeus allowed them to pool their fates, and live alternate days in Hades and Olympus.>>

ORPHEUS.
A partial wisdom to a partial ear.

JASON.
But what speech came to thee?

ORPHEUS.
I heard no voice.

ARGUS.
What means the? Here's my labour thrown away,
My skill made jest of, all my wage destroyed
At one fell stroke.

JASON.
What? Is the Argo burnt? {97A}

ARGUS.
Burnt! Should I then complain? The ship is finished.

JASON.
The Goddess, furious at thine absence, Argus,
Hath frenzied thee with some delusion.

HERACLES.
Calm!
Control thy madness! I am sorry now
My pungent wit so shamed his arrogance
As made him seem to scorn Athena.

ARGUS.
Thou!
But see me, I am ruined. The good ship
Is finished! Where's my daily wage?

JASON.
Be sure
I pay thee treble if thy tale be true.

ARGUS.
Ay! treble nothing! I shall buy a palace.

JASON.
Treble thine utmost wish.

ARGUS.

Two evils then
Thou pilest on one good! But come and see!
["The Argo is discovered."

CHORUS OF HEROES.

By wisdom framed from ancient days
The stately Argo stands above;
Too firm to fear, too great to praise,
The might of bright Athena's love!
Oh! ship of glory! tread the foam,
And bring our guerdon from its home! {97B}

The silent thought, the hand unseen,
The rayless majesty of light
Shed from the splendour of our Queen
Athena! mystery and might;
These worked invisibly to bring
The end of triumph to our King.

Great Jason, wronged by hate of man,
Shall pass the portals of the deep;
Shall seek the waters wide and wan;
Shall pass within the land of sleep;
And there the guardians of the soil
Shall rest at last from pain and toil.

O ruler of the empyrean,
Behold his fervour conquering
The fury of the breed Cadmean,
The dragons of the Theban king;
And armed men shall spring from earth
In vain to ward the gloomy girth!

But thou, Athena, didst devise
Some end beyond our mortal ken,
Thy soul impenetrably wise
Shines not to us unthinking men.
O guard the warrior band of Greece,
And win for us the Golden Fleece!

By miracle this happy day

The ship is finished for our quest.
Bring thou the glory from the gray!

Bring thou our spirits into rest!
O Wisdom, that hast helped so far,
Sink never thou thy guiding star!

CHORUS OF WORKMEN.

Then let us gather one and all,
And launch our dragon on the main
With paeans raised most musical,
Until our heroes come again.
With watching and with prayer we wait
The imperious Destinies of Fate!

EXPLICIT ACTUS SECUNDUS. {98A}

ARGONAUTAE.

"ACTUS TERTIUS."

MEDEA.

AEETES, JASON, MEDEA, Messengers,
"Chorus of" Heroes.

SCENE: "The Palace of "AEETES.

AEETES.
Were this man son of Zeus, beloved of Heaven,
And skilled with very craft of Maia's son,
Stronger than Phoebus, subtler than the Sphinx,
This plague should catch him, nor my wisdom spare.

CHORUS OF HEROES.
Thus hast thou sent him unto Hades, king.

AEETES.
Not otherwise were such gain possible.
Ye are the witnesses that with much skill,
And eloquence of shining words, and thought

Darkling behind their measured melody,
I did dissuade him.

CHORUS.

Such an enterprise
After such toils no man should lightly leave.
Remember all the tasks impossible
This hero hath already done, before
He ever touched this sounding coast of thine.

AEETES.

Alas! but now his weird is loneliness!

CHORUS.

Was that from Destiny, or will of thine? {98B}

AEETES.

I love him little. Yet my words were true,
Nor would it skill him aught if myriad men
Bucklered his back and breast. For when a man
Batters with sword-hilt at the frowning gates
That lead to the Beyond, not human force --
Hardly the favour of the gods themselves --
Shall stead him in that peril.

CHORUS.

Yet we know
Courage may conquer all things.

AEETES.

Such a man
Is greater than the gods!

CHORUS.

If only he
Know who he is -- that all these gods and men
And things are but the shadows of himself!

AEETES.

I cannot give you hope. Await the end.

CHORUS.

We fear indeed that in the trap

Of wiles our king is taken.
Lachesis shakes a careless lap
And dooms divine awaken!
A desolate and cruel hap

In this sad hour is shaken.

The desperate son and violent
Of Helios hath designed
A fate more hard than Pelias meant,
Revolving in his mind
Mischief to catch the coiled ascent
Of groaning humankind.

O bright Athena, hitherto
Protectress of the quest,
Divide the deep descending blue!
Be present, ever-blest!
Bring thou the hero Jason through
To victory -- and rest! {99A}

MEDEA.
Not by Athena's calm omnipotence,
O heroes, look for safety! Little men,
Looking to God, are blinded; mighty ones,
Seeking His presence, reel before the glance;
And They, the greatest that may be of men,
Become that light, and care no whit for earth.
But all your prayers are answered by yourselves,
As I myself achieve this thought of mine.

CHORUS.
To me thou seemest to blaspheme the gods.

MEDEA.
Belike I seem, O ye of little wit.

CHORUS.
Surely thy tender years and gentle looks
Belie such hatred to our king! I scorn
To triumph on an enemy once fallen.

MEDEA.
Fools always! I am tenderer than my years,

And gentler than my glances.

CHORUS.

Sayst thou -- what?

MEDEA.

Ye know me a most powerful sorceress.

CHORUS.

So I have heard, O lotus-footed<<1>> one!
Nathless I see not any miracle.

<<1. An epithet common in the East, conveying a great compliment.>>

MEDEA.

Last night the heavy-hearted audience
Broke up, and Jason wended wearily
His way, oppressed by direful bodements of
The fate of this forenoon. I saw him go
Sad, and remembered how sublime he stood, {99B}
Bronzed with a ruder sun than ours, and scarred
(Rough tokens of old battles) yet so calm
And mild (with all that vigour) that to me
Came a swift pity -- the enchanter's bane.
That I flung from me. But my subtle soul
Struck its own bosom with the sword of thought,
So that I saw not pity, but desire!

CHORUS.

Surely a bane more potent than the first.

MEDEA.

Love is itself enchantment!

CHORUS.

Some kind god
Whispers from this a little light of hope.

MEDEA.

Only the hopeless are the happy ones.<<1>>

<<1. "The hopeless are happy, like the girl Pingala" (Buddhist Proverb).
Pingala waited for her lover, and mourned because he came not. But, giving

up hope at last, she regained her cheerfulness. "Cf." 2 Samuel xii, 15-23.>>

CHORUS.

But didst thou turn him from his gleaming goal?
Cover that shame with sweeter shame than this?

MEDEA.

Thou knowest that his vigil was to keep,
Invoking all Olympus all the night,
And then to yoke the oxen, and to plough
The fearful furrow, sow the dreadful seed,
Smite down the armies, and assuage the pest
Of slime thrice coiled about the sacred grove.

CHORUS.

Thy bitter love disturbed that solitude?

MEDEA.

Not bitter, heroes. See ye yet the end? {100A}

CHORUS.

Our good quest ended by thy father's hate,
And by thy own hour's madness! This I see.

MEDEA.

But if he gain the Fleece?

CHORUS.

A blissful end.

MEDEA.

This end and that are moulded diversely.

CHORUS.

Riddle no more, nor ply with doubtful hope
Hearts ready to rejoice and to despair
Equally minded.

MEDEA.

At the midmost hour,
His mind given up to sleepless muttering
Of charms not mine -- decrees Olympian --
All on a sudden he felt fervent arms

Flung round him, and a hot sweet body's rush
Lithe to embrace him, and a cataract
Of amber-scented hair hissing about
His head, and in the darkness two great eyes
Flaming above him, and the whole face filled
With fire and shapen as kisses. And those arms
And kisses and mad movements of quick love

Burnt up his being, and his life was lost
In woman's love at last!

CHORUS.
Unseemly act!
Who dared thus break on meditation?

MEDEA.
I.

CHORUS.
Surely thy passion mastered thee, O queen! {100B}

MEDEA.
I tell you -- thus the night passed.

CHORUS.
Verily,
The woman raves.

MEDEA.
Such victory as this
Outsails all shame. before the dawn was up
I bound such talismans about his breast
That fire and steel grow dew and flowery wreaths
For all their power to hurt him. Presently
I made a posset, drugged with somnolence,
Sleepy with poppy and white hellebore,
Fit for the dragon. This was my design.

CHORUS.
Beware thy father's anger when he finds
His plans thus baffled! He will murder us.

MEDEA.
Heroes indeed ye are, and lion hearts.

CHORUS.

No woman need school me in bravery.

MEDEA.

Rather a hare.

CHORUS.

Most impudent of whores!

MEDEA.

But when my husband comes victorious
Fleece-laden, he will rather --

CHORUS.

Wilt thou then
Further my ruin, making known this shame!

MEDEA.

Here is the Argive sense of gratitude.
Let me stir up its subtler thought, and show
What favours ye may gather afterward
From hands and lips ye scorn -- not courteously. {101A}

CHORUS.

What? Canst thou save us from this newer doom?

MEDEA.

I love your leader with no mortal love,
But with the whole strength of a sorceress.

CHORUS.

It seems indeed thy hot will can bewitch
Our chaste one with one action impudent.

MEDEA.

I will not leave him ever in the world.

CHORUS.

Persistence in these ills -- will cure them not.
"Worst" is the hunter, "worse" the hound, when "bad"
Is the stag's name.

MEDEA.

We rule Iolchus' land.

CHORUS.

Indeed the hunter follows. I despise
Lewd conduct in the lowest, and detest
Spells hurtful to the head, when ancient hags
Brew their bad liquors at the waning moon,
Barking their chants of murder. But to rule

A land, and wive a king, and bread to him
Kings -- then such persons are unsuitable.

MEDEA.

Unless these words were well repented of
I might transform ye into - --

CHORUS.

Stay, great queen!

MEDEA.

Well for your respite comes this messenger. {101B}

MESSENGER.

Queen and fair mother of great kings unborn,
And mighty chosen of the land of Greece,
A tiding of deep bliss is born to you.

CHORUS.

Tell me that Jason has achieved the quest.

MESSENGER.

Truth is no handmaid unto happiness.

CHORUS.

What terror dost thou fill my heart withal?

MEDEA.

O timorous heroes! Let the herald speak!
Who meets fear drives her back; who flees from fear
Stumbles; who cares not, sees her not.
Speak on!

THE MESSENGER.

Terrible bellowings as of angry bulls
Broke from the stable as the first swift shaft
Of dawn smote into it: and stampings fierce
Resounded, shaking the all-mother earth.
Whereunto came the calm and kingly man,
Smiling as if a sweet dream still beguiled
His waking brows; not caring any more
For spring or summer; heeding least of all
That tumult of ox-fury. Suddenly
A light sprang in his face; the great hand shot

Forth, and broke in the brass-bound door; the day
Passed with him inwards; then the brazen hoofs
Beat with a tenfold fury on the stone.
But Jason, swiftly turned, evaded these,
And chose two oxen from that monstrous herd
To whose vast heads he strode, and by the horns
Plucked them. Then fire, devouring, sprang at him
From furious nostrils: and indignant breath,
Fountains of seething smoke, spat forth at him. {102A}
But with no tremor of aught that seemed like fear
Drew them by sheer strength from their place, and joked
Their frenzy to his plough, and with the goad
Urged them, thrice trampling the accursed field
Until the furrows flamed across the sun,
Treading whose glory stood Apollo's self
As witness of the deed. Then at last thrust
Savage, drove them less savage to their stalls,
And Jason turned and laughed. Then drew he out
The dreadful teeth of woe, Cadmean stock
Of Thebes' old misery, and presently
Pacing the furrowed field, he scattered them
With muttered words of power athwart the course
Of the bright moon, due path of pestilence
And terror. Ere the last bone fell to earth
The accursed harvest sprang to life. Armed men,
Fiery with anger, rose upon the earth
While Jason stood, one witnessing a dream,
Not one who lives his life. The sword and spear
Turn not to him, but mutual madness strikes
The warriors witless, and fierce wrath invades
Their hearts of fury, and with arms engaged
They fell upon each other silently
And slew, and slew. As in the middle seas

A mirage flashes out and passes, so
The phantoms faded, and the way was clear.
Thus, stepping ever proud and calm, he went
Unto the grove of Ares, where the worm,
Huge in his hatred, guarded all. But now
Sunk in some stupor, surely sent of Zeus,
He stirred not. Stepping delicately past
The dragon, then came Jason to the grove
And saw what tree umbrageous bore the fruit
That he had saddened for so long. And he,
Rending the branches of that wizard Oak,

With a strong grasp tore down the Fleece of Gold.
Then came a voice: "Woe, woe! Aea's isle!
Thy glory is departed!" And a voice
Answered it "Woe!" Then Jason seemed to see
Some Fear behind the little former fears; {102B}
And his face blanched a moment, as beholding
Some Fate, some distant grief. Then, catching sight
Now of the glory of his gain, he seemed
Caught in an ecstasy, treading the earth
As in a brighter dream than Aphrodite
Sent ever to a man, he turned himself
(We could not see him for the golden flame
Burning about him!) moving hitherward.
But I took horse and hasted, since reward
May greet such tidings, and for joy to see
Your joy exceed my joy.

MEDEA.
Reward indeed
Awaits thee from such folk as us, who stand
In fear of life, when great Aeetes hears
This news, and how all came.

MESSENGER.
My lady's smile
Is the reward I sought, not place nor gold.

MEDEA.
Thou hast it, child.

SECOND MESSENGER.
The hero is at hand.

CHORUS.

O happy of mortals!
O frontier of fear,
The impassable portals!
Our song shall be rolled in the praise of the gold, and its glory be told
where the heavenly fold rejoices to hold the stars in its sphere.

O hero Iolchian!
Warrior king!
From the kingdom Colchian
The Fleece dost bring!

Our song shall be sung and its melody flung where the Lure and the Tongue
are fervid and young, all islands among where the Sirens sing. {103A}

Thou bearest, strong shoulder,
The sunbright fleece!
Glow swifter and bolder
And brighter -- and cease!
O glory of light! O woven of night! O shining and bright! O dream of
delight! How splendid the sight for the dwellers of Greece!

Gained is the guerdon!
The prize is won.
The fleecy burden,
The soul of the sun!
The toil is over; the days discover high joys that hover of lover and
lover, and fates above her are fallen and done.

JASON.

Queen of this people! O my heart's desire
Spotless, the Lady of my love, and friends
By whose heroic arduous I am found
Victor at last, well girded with the spoil
Of life in gleaming beauty, and this prize
Thrice precious, my Medea -- all is won!
Needs only now the favouring kiss of Eurus,
Bright-born of Eos, to fulfil for us
The last of all the labours, to inspire
The quick-raised sail, and fill that flushing gold
With thrice desired breath, that once again
Our prow plunge solemn in the Argive waters

To strains of music -- victory at peace
Mingling with sweeter epithalamy --
To tell our friends how happy was the quest.

MEDEA.

But not those strains of music, though divine
From Orpheus' winged lyre, exalt at all
Our joy to joy, beyond all music's power!

CHORUS.

I fear Aeetes, and the Pelian guile.

JASON.

Fear is but failure, heard of distress!

MEDEA.

What virtue lives there in the coward's hate? {103B}

CHORUS.

In sooth, I have no fear at all -- to flee.

JASON.

Night, like a mist, steals softly from the East.
The hand of darkness gathers up the folds
Of day's gold garment, and the valleys sink
Into slow sadness, though the hills retain
That brilliance for a little.

CHORUS.

Let us go!
Methinks that under cover of the night
I may escape Aeetes.

JASON.

If he chase,
Our Argo is not battered by rough winds
So far but what some fight were possible

MEDEA. ["Leads forward" ABSYRTUS.]
I know a better way than that, my lord.
This boy shall come with us.

JASON.

Ah, not to Greece!
Aea needs to-morrow's king.

MEDEA.
"With us"
I said. "To Greece" -- I said not.

CHORUS.
What is this?
Thou hintest at some dangerous destiny.

MEDEA.
Come love, to the long years of love with me!

JASON.
Form, heroes, and in solemn order stride;
The body-guardians of the Golden Fleece!

MEDEA.
Guarding your king and queen on every side -- {104A}

CHORUS.
We sail triumphant to the land of Greece.

MEDEA.
A woman's love, a woman's power be told
Through ages, gainers of the Fleece of Gold.

EXPLICIT ACTUS TERTIUS.

ARGONAUTAE.

"ACTUS QUARTUS."

SIRENAE.

JASON, MEDEA, ORPHEUS, THESEUS, HERACLES, "Chorus of" Heroes, "The"
Sirens.

SCENE: "The Argo."

MEDEA.

Ay! I would murder not my brother only,
But tear my own limbs, strew them on the sea,<<1>>
To keep one fury from the man I love!

<<1. The Argonauts being pursued by Aeetes, Medea threw the severed limbs and trunk of Absyrtus upon the sea, so that the father, stopping to perform the sacred duties of burial, was left behind.>>

CHORUS.

This act and speech are much akin to madness.

MEDEA.

Remember that your own skins pay the price.

CHORUS.

I now remember somewhat of the voice
Of the oracle, that Madness should hunt hard
On the thief's furtive track, upon the prow
Brooding, and at the table president,
And spouse-like in the bed. {104B}

MEDEA.

But this is like
That Indian fable<<1>> of a king: how he,
Taking some woman -- an indecent act
Not proper to be done! -- against the will
Of priests or princes, sought the nuptial bed
And
"Climbed the bed's disastrous side,
He found a serpent, not a bride;
And scarcely daring to draw breath,
He passed the dumb night-hours with death,
Till in the morning cold and gray
The hooded fear glided away.
Which morning saw ten thousand pay
The price of jesting with a king!" --

<<1. The "fable" is Crowley's own.>>

JASON.

Indeed these toils and dangerous pursuits,
Labours and journeys, go to make one mad.

Well were it to beguile our weariness
With song.

MEDEA.

And here is the sole king of song.

ORPHEUS.

My song breaks baffled on the rocks of time
If thy bewitching beauty be the theme.

MEDEA.

Sing me thy song, sweet poet, of the sea,
That song of swimming when thy love lost sense
Before the passion of the Infinite.

JASON.

The more so as my master warns me oft
Of late how near that island is, where dwell
The alluring daughters of Melpomene. {105A}

ORPHEUS.<<1>>

Light shed from seaward over breakers bending
Kiss-wise to the emerald hollows; light divine
Whereof the sun is God, the sea his shrine;
Light in vibrations rhythmic; light unending;
Light sideways from the girdling crags extending
Unto this lone and languid head of mine;
Light, that fulfils creation as with wine,
Flows in the channels of the deep: light, rending
The adamantine columns of the night.
Is laden with the love-song of the light.

<<1. The song describes Waikiki Beach, near Honolulu.>>

Light, pearly-glimmering through dim gulf and hollow,
Below the foam-kissed lips of all the sea;
Light shines from all the sky and up to me
From the amber floors of sand: Light calls Apollo!
The shafts of fire fledged of the eagle follow
The crested surf, and strike the shore, and flee
Far from green cover, nymph-enchanted lea,
Fountain, and plume them white as the sea-swallow,
And turn and quiver in the ocean, seeming

The glances of a maiden kissed, or dreaming.

Light, as I swim through rollers green and gleaming,
Sheds its most subtle sense to penetrate
This heart I thought impervious to Fate.
Now the sweet light, the full delight, is beaming {105B}
Through me and burns me: all my flesh is teeming
With the live kisses of the sea, my mate,
My mistress, till the fires of life abate
And live me languid, man-forgotten, deeming
I see in sleep, in many-coloured night,
More hope than in the flame-waves of the light.

Light! ever light! I swim far out and follow
The footsteps of the wind, and light invades
My desolate soul, and all the cypress shades
Glow with transparent lustre, and the hollow

I thought I had hidden in my heart must swallow
The bitter draught of Truth; no Nereid maids
Even in my sea are mine; the whole sea's glades
And hills and springs are void of my Apollo --
The Sea herself my tune and my desire!
The Sun himself my lover and my lyre!

CHORUS.

This song is sweeter than the honeycomb.

MEDEA.

Nearly as sweet as good friends quarrelling.

JASON.

Look, friends, methinks I see a silvern shape
Like faint mist floating on the farthest sea.

MEDEA.

I see a barren rock above the tides.

JASON.

I hear a sound like water whispering.

MEDEA.

I hear a harsh noise like some ancient crone
Muttering curses. {106A}

JASON.

Now I hear a song.
'Tis like some shape of sleep that moans for joy,
Some bridal sob of love!

MEDEA.

O Son of God!
My poet, swiftly leap the live lyre forth!
Else we are all enchanted -- yet to me
This song is nowise lovely. But in him
I note the live look of the eyes leap up,
And all his love for me forgotten straight
At the mere echo of that tune.

ORPHEUS.

Hark, friends!
Aea's tune -- my Colchian harbour-song!<<1>>

<<1. The harbour in which this lyric was written was that of Vera Cruz.>>

I hear the waters faint and far,
And look to where the Polar Star,
Half hidden in the haze, divides
The double chanting of the tides;
But, where the harbour's gloomy mouth
Welcomes the stranger to the south,
The water shakes, and all the sea
Grows silver suddenly.

As one who standing on the moon
Sees the vast horns in silver hewn,
Himself in darkness, and beholds
How silently all space unfolds
Into her shapeless breast the spark
And sacred phantom of the dark;
So in the harbour-horns I stand
Till I forget the land.

Who sails through all that solemn space
Out to the twilight's secret place,
The sleepy waters move below
His ship's imaginary flow.

No song, no lute, so lowly chaunts
In woods where still Arsibe haunts,
Wrapping the wanderer with her tresses
Into untold carresses. {106B}

For none of all the sons of men
That hath known Artemis, again
Turns to the warmer earth, or vows
His secrets to another spouse.
The moon resolves her beauty in
The sea's deep kisses salt and keen;
The sea assumes the lunar light,
And he -- their eremite!

In their calm intercourse and kiss
Even hell itself no longer is;
For nothing in their love abides
That passes not beneath their tides,
And whoso bathes in light of theirs,

And water, changes unawares
To be no separate soul, but be
Himself the moon and sea.

Not all the wealth that flowers shed,
And sacred streams, on that calm head;
Not all the earth's spell-weaving dream
And scent of new-turned earth shall seem
Again indeed his mother's breast
To breathe like sleep and give him rest;
He lives or dies in subtler swoon
Beneath the sea and moon.

So standing, gliding, undeterred
By any her alluring word
That calls from older forest glades,
My soul forgets the gentle maids
That wooed me in the scarlet bowers,
And golden cluster-woof of flowers;
Forgets itself, content to be
Between the moon and sea.

No passion stirs their depth, nor moves;
No life distrubs their sweet dead loves;

No being holds a crown or throne;
They are, and I in them, alone:
Only some lute-player grown star
Is heard like whispering flowers afar;
And some divided, single tune
Sobs from the sea and moon.

Amid thy mountains shall I rise,
O moon, and float about thy skies?
Beneath thy waters shall I roam,
O sea, and call thy valleys home? {107A}
Or on Daedalian oarage fare
Forth in the interlunar air?
Imageless mirror-life! to be
sole between moon and sea.

CHORUS.
No song can lure us while he signs so well.

JASON.

But look! I see entrancing woman-forms
That beckon -- fairy-like and not of earth.
So, fitter than the bed of this my queen
To rest heroic limbs!

MEDEA.
The wretched one!
Thou knowest that their kiss is death!

JASON.
Perhaps.
It were their kiss.

MEDEA.
Are not my kisses sweet?

JASON.
Listen, they sing. This time the words ring true,
Sailing across that blue abyss between.
Like young birds winging their bright flight the notes
Glimmer across the sea.

MEDEA.

They sing, they sing!

PARTHENOPE.

O mortal, tossed on life's unceasing ocean,
Whose waves of joy and sorrow never cease,
Eternal change -- one changeless thing, commotion!
Even in death no hint of calm and peace! -- {107B}
Here is the charm, the life-assuaging potion,
Here is a better home for thee than Greece!
Come, love, to my deep, soft, sleepy breast!
Here is thy rest!

O mortal, said is life! But in my kisses
Thou may'st forget its fever-parched thirst.
Age, death, and sorrow fade in slender blisses:
My swoon of love drinks up the draught accurst.
And all thy seasons grow as sweet as this is,
One constant summer in sleep's bosom nursed.
All storm and sunlight, star and season, cease,
Here is thy peace.

O mortal, sad is love! But my dominion
Extends beyond love's ultimate abode.
Eternity itself is but a minion,
Lighting my way on the untravelled road.
Gods shelter 'neath one shadow of my pinion.
Thou only tread the path none else hath trode!
Come, lover, in my breast all blooms above,
Here is thy love!

MEDEA.

My poet, now! The one song in the world!

ORPHEUS.

Above us on the mast is spread
The splendour of the fleece!
Before us, Argive maidens tread
The glowing isles of Greece!
Behind us, fear and toil are dead:
Below, the breakers cease!
The Holy Light is on my head --
My very name is Peace! {108A}

The water's music moves; and swings
The sea's eternal breast.
The wind above us whistles, rings,
And wafts us to the West.
Greece lures us on with beckonings
And sighs of slumber blest.
I am not counted with the kings --
My very name is Rest!

Medea shoots her sweetest glance
And Jason bends above --
Young virgins in Iolchus dance,
Hearing the news thereof.
The heroes -- see their glad advance!
Hath Greece not maids enough?
I lie in love's ecstatic trance.
My very name is love!

LIGIA.
Come over the water, love, to me!
Come over the little space!
Come over, my lover, and thou shalt see

The beauty of my face!
Come over the water! I will be
A bride and a queen and a lover to thee!

Come over the water, love, and lie!
All day and all night to kiss!
Come over, my lover, an hour to die
In the language-baffling bliss!
Come over the water! Must I sigh?
Thy lover and bride and queen am I!

Come over the water, love, and bide
An hour in my swift caress!
So short is the space, and so smooth the tide --
More smooth is my loveliness!
Come over the water, love, to my side!
I am thy lover and queen and bride!

MEDEA.
Sing, poet, ere the rash fool leap!

JASON.

Ah, Zeus! {108B}

ORPHEUS.

The hearts of Greeks with sharper flames
Burn than with one fire of all fire,
We have the Races and the Games,
The song, the chisel, and the lyre;
We have the altar, we the shrine,
And ours the joy of love and wine.

Why take one pleasure, put aside
The myriad bliss of life diverse?
Unchanging joy will soon divide
Into the likeness of a curse.
Have we no maidens, slender, strong,
Daughters of tender-throated song?

I swear by Aphrodite's eyes
Our Grecian maids are fairer far!
What love as sweet as their is lies
In Sun or planet, moon or star?
What nymphs as sweet as ours are dwell

By foreign grove and alien well?

With every watchman's cheery cry,
"Land ho!" through all the journeying years
Our ever-hoping hearts reply,
"A land of bliss at last appears."
But what land laps a foreign foam
So sweet as is the hero's home?

At every port the novel sights
Charm for an hour -- delusive bliss.
On every shore the false delights
Of maidens ply the barbarous kiss.
But where did hero think to stay
Lulled in their love beyond a day?

No shoreland whistles to the wind
So musically as Thrace: no town
So gladdens the toil-weary mind
As brave Athenae: no renown

Stands so divine in war and peace
As the illustrious name of Greece. {109A}

This island of the subtle song
Shall vanish as the shaken spray
Tossed by the billow far and strong
On marble coasts: we will not stay!
Dreams lure not those who ply the sail
Before, the home! behind, the gale!

JASON.
Ah! I am torn, I am torn!

MEDEA.
God's poet, hail!
Help us, Apollo! Light of Sun, awake!
This is the desperate hour.

JASON.
I have no strength.

MEDEA.
Beware the third, the awful ecstasy!

ORPHEUS.
A higher spell controls a lower song.
Listen, they sing!

JASON.
Joy! Joy! they sing, they sing!

LEUCOSIA.
O love, I am lonely here!
O love, I am weeping!
Each pearl of ocean is a tear
Let fall while love was sleeping.

A tear is made of fire and dew
And saddened with a smile;
The sun's laugh in the curving blue
Lasts but a little while.

The night-winds kiss the deep: the stars

Shed laughter from above;
But night must pass dawn's prison bars:
Night hath not tasted love. {109B}

With me the night is fallen in day;
The day swoons back to night;
The white and black are woven in gray,
Faint sleep of silken light.

A strange soft light about me shed
Devours the sense of time:
Hovers about my sleepy head
Some sweet persistent rhyme.

Beneath my breast my love may hear
Deep murmur of the billows --
O gather me to thee, my dear,
On soft forgetful pillows!

O gather me in arms of love
As maidens plucking posies,
Or mists that fold about a dove,
Or valleys full of roses!

O let me fade and fall away

From waking into sleep,
From sleep to death, from gold to gray,
Deep as the skies are deep!

O let me fall from death to dream,
Eternal monotone;
Faint eventide of sleep supreme
With thee and love alone!

A jewelled night of star and moon
Shall watch our bridal chamber,
Bending the blue rays to the tune
Of softly-sliding amber.

Dim winds shall whisper echoes of
Our slow ecstatic breath,
Telling all worlds how sweet is love,
How beautiful is death.

MEDEA.

Sing, Orpheus, this doth madden them the most.
Should one man leap -- This tune is terrible!

ORPHEUS.

I am not moved, although I am a man.
So strong a safeguard is cool chastity. {110A}

MEDEA.

But love thou me! My husband is distraught.

ORPHEUS.

Madness is on him for thy punishment.

MEDEA.

Sing, therefore!

ORPHEUS.

This last song of theirs was sweet.

MEDEA.

Thine therefore should be sweeter.

ORPHEUS.

The Gods grant it!

Lift up this love of peace and bliss,
The starry soul of wine,
Destruction's formidable kiss,
The lamp of the divine;
This shadow of a nobler name
Whose life is strife, whose soul is fame!

I rather will exalt the soul
Of man to loftier height,
And kindle at a livelier coal
The subtler soul of Light.
From these soft splendours of a dream
I turn, and seek the Self supreme.

This world is shadow-shapen of
The bitterness of pain.

Vain are the little lamps of love!
The light of life is vain!
Life, death, joy, sorrow, age and youth
Are phantoms of a further truth.

Beyond the splendour of the world,<<1>>
False glittering of the gold,
A Serpent is in slumber curled
In wisdom's sacred cold.
Life is the flaming of that flame.
Death is the naming of that name. {110B}

<<1. The theory of these verses is that of certain esoteric schools among
the Hindus.>>

The forehead of the snake is bright
With one immortal star,
Lighting her coils with living light
To where the nenuphar
Sleeps for her couch. All darkness dreams
The thing that is not, only seems.

That star upon the serpent's head
Is called the soul of man;
That light in shadows subtly shed
The glamour of life's plan.
The sea whereon that lotus grows

Is thought's abyss of tears and woes.

Leave Sirenusa! Even Greece
Forget! they are not there!
By worship cometh not the Peace,
The Silence not by prayer!
Leave the illusions, life and time
And death, and seek that star sublime --

Until the lotus and the sea
And snake no longer are,
And single through eternity
Exists alone the Star,
And utter Knowledge rise and cease
In that which is beyond the Peace!

JASON.

Those isles have faded: was this vision true?

HERACLES.

I know not what hath passed: I seem asleep
Still, with the dream yet racing in my brain.

THESEUS.

There was a sweetness: whether sight or song
I know not.

JASON.

But my veins grew strong and swollen
And madness came upon me.

MEDEA.

You are here,
Let that suffice. Remember not! {111B}

ORPHEUS.

But now
I see the haze lift on the water-way,
And hidden headlands loom again.

JASON.

I know
The pleasant portals.

CHORUS.

Here is home at last.

ORPHEUS.

The sunset comes: the mist is lifted now
To let the last kiss of the daylight fall
Once ere night whisper "Sleep!"

JASON.

And see! the ship
Glides between walls of purple.

MEDEA.

The green land
Cools the tired eyes.

CHORUS.

The rocks stand sentinel.

MEDEA.

Let still the song that saved us gladden us.
Lift up thy lyre, sweet Orpheus, on the sea.

ORPHEUS.<<1>>

Over a sea like stained glass
At sunset like chrysopras: --
Our smooth-oared vessel over-rides
Crimson and green and purple tides.
Between the rocky isles we pass,
And greener islets gay with grass;
Between the over-arching sides
Our pinnace glides. {111B}

<<1. The song describes the approach to Hong Kong Harbour.>>

Just by the Maenad-haunted hill
Songs rise into the air, and thrill,
Like clustered birds at evening
When love outlingers rain and spring.
Faint faces of strange dancers spill
Their dewy scent; and sweet and chill
The wind comes faintly whispering
On wanton wing.

Between the islands sheer and steep
Our craft treads noiseless o'er the deep,
Turned to the gold heart of the west,
The sun's last sigh of love expressed
Ere the lake glimmer, borrow sleep
From clouds and tinge their edges; weep
That night brings love not to his breast,
But only rest.

We move toward the golden track
Shed in the water: we look back
Eastward, where rose is set to warn
Promise and prophecy of dawn
Reflected, lest the ocean lack

In any space serene or slack
Some colour, blushing o'er the fawn
Dim-lighted lawn.

And under all the shadowy shapes
Of steep and silent bays and capes
The water takes its darkest hue;
Catches no laughter from the blue;
No purple ray or gold escapes,
But dim green shadow comes and drapes
Its lustre: thus the night burns through
Tall groves of yew.

Thither, ah thither! Hollow vales
Trembling with early nightingales!
Languish, O sea of sleep! Young moon!
Dream on above in maiden swoon!
None daring to invoke the gales
To shake our sea, and swell our sails.
Not song, but silence, were a boon --
Save for this tune.

Round capes grown darker as night falls,
We see at last the splendid walls
That ridge the bay; the town lies there
Lighted (the temple's hour for prayer) {112A}
At grave harmonious intervals.
The grand voice of some seaman calls,
Just as the picture fades, aware
How it was fair.

JASON.

A thousand victories bring us to the shore
Whence we set out: look forth! The people come
Moving with lights about the anchorage
To greet the heroes of the Golden Fleece.
My Queen! Medea! Welcome unto Greece!

EXPLICIT ACTUS QUARTUS.

ARGONAUTAE.

"ACTUS QUINTUS."<<1>>

<<1. The legend is grotesque, and the poet's power is strained -- perhaps overstrained -- to be faithful without being ridiculous. Only the tragic necessity of avenging the indignity done to Ares compelled this conclusion of the drama, and the somewhat fantastic and unreal machinery of the catastrophe.>>

ARES.

JASON, MEDEA, PELIAS, ACASTUS, ALCESTIS "and her" Sisters, MADNESS

SCENE: "The Palace at Iolchus."

MADNESS.

Black Ares hath called
Me forth from the deep!
Blind and appalled,
Shall the palace high-walled
Shake as I leap
Over the granite,
The marble over,
One step to span it,
One flight to hover,
Like a moon round a planet,
A dream round a lover! {112B}

How shall I come?
Shrieking and yelling?
Or quiet and dumb

To the heart of the dwelling?
Silently striding,
Whispering terror
Into their ears;
Watching, abiding,
Madness and error,
Brooder of fears!

Thus will I bring
Black Ares to honour,
Draw the black sting
Of the serpent upon her!

How foolish to fight
With the warrior God
Who brings victory bright
Or defeat with a nod,
Who standeth to smite
With a spear and a rod!
Here is the woman,
Thinking no evil,
Wielding the human
By might of a devil!
But I will mock her
With cunning design,
In my malice lock her.
The doom is divine!

MEDEA.

Ai! Ai! This rankles sorely in my mind
That Pelias should wander, free to slide
His sidelong looks among our courtiers
Ripe ever for some mischief. Yet methinks
There is a wandering other than this present --
Say, by the Stygian waves, unburied corpse! --
But, for the means? It ill befits our power
And grace -- my husband's honour -- to stretch forth
The arm of murder o'er the head of age.
But surely must be means ----

MADNESS.

The prophecy! {113A}

MEDEA.

Happy my thought be! I have found it. Ha!

"Athena shall relent not till the king
Shall die and live." Vainly the prophet meant
Mere transference of the crown. I'll twist his saying
To daze the children -- fools they are! So mask
Evil beneath the waxen face of Good,
Trick out Calamity in robes of Luck --
Come, children! Is the sun bright? And your eyes?

ALCESTIS.

Dear queen, all's well with us. Such happiness
Crowds daylight -- even sleep seems sorrowful,

Though bright with dainty dreams!

FIRST DANAID.
But you are sad!

MEDEA.
I meditate the ancient prophecy.
Thus a foreboding is upon my heart,
Seeing some danger follow yet, o'erhang
Our heads, poised gaily in incertitude!

SECOND DANAID.
Nay, grieve not, dear Medea! All men say
The prophecy is well fulfilled.

MEDEA.
Ay me!
"Until the king shall die and live again."

ALCESTIS.
What means that?

MEDEA.
I have meditated long.

SECOND DANAID.
To what sad end? {113B}

MEDEA.
At the full end I see
Allusion to my magic -- to that spell
Whereby an old man may renew his youth.

ALCESTIS.
Our father!

MEDEA.
You have guessed aright, my child.
Your father must abandon his old age
And -- by my magic -- find sweet youth again!

DANAIDES.
But this is very difficult to do.

MEDEA.

For me such miracles are merely play,
Serving to while away the idle hours
While Jason hunts ----

ALCESTIS.

How grand it were to see
Our aged father rival the strong youths
In feats of great agility!

MEDEA.

Agreed!
But surely you should work the charm yourselves.
For children magic is a blithesome game!

DANAIDES.

Dear lady! teach us how to say the spell!

MEDEA.

Words must be aided by appalling deeds!

ALCESTIS.

O! O! you frighten us.

MEDEA.

Be brave, my child!
I too passed through unutterable things!

ALCESTIS.

Let me fetch father! {114A}

MEDEA.

Nay, consider first.

would he consent? The process is severe!

DANAIDES.

We know the sire is not exactly brave,
Though very wise and good.

MEDEA.

'Tis clear to me;
Without his knowledge we must do the deed.

ALCESTIS.
What is this "deed"?

MEDEA.
A caldron is prepared;
And, having hewn your father limb from limb,
We seethe him in a broth of magic herbs.

ALCESTIS.
And then?

MEDEA.
The proper incantations said,
There rises from the steam a youthful shape
More godlike than like man. And he will fall
In kind embraces on his children's necks.

ALCESTIS.
O queen, this process seems indeed severe.

MEDEA.
Without his knowledge must the thing be done.

DANAIDES.
This also seems to us no easy task.

MEDEA.
He sleeps through noon, while others are abroad.

ALCESTIS.
Let us make haste! Dear queen, how good you are! {114B}

MEDEA.
One thing remember! While you say the spell --

Here is the parchment! -- let no thought arise
In any of your minds!<<1>>

<<1. It is a common jest among the Hindus to play this trick on a pupil, "i.e.". to promise him magical power on condition that during a given ceremonial he abstains from thinking of a certain object ("e.g.", a horse). He fails, because only the training of years can enable a student so to control his mind as to accomplish this feat of suppressing involuntary thought.>>

ALCESTIS. ["To her Sisters."]
Remember that!

MEDEA.
Else -- Ototototoi

FIRST DANAID.
What woe is this?

MEDEA.
The charm is broken.

SECOND DANAID.
And our father ----

MEDEA.
Lost!

DANAIDES.
Ai Ai! Ai Ai! Ai Ai!

MEDEA.
Ai Ai! Ai Ai!

ALCESTIS.
Be brave, dear sisters, pluck your courage up!
Easy this one condition! All is safe.

MEDEA.
Haste then! Good luck attend you! When the hunt
Returns, how joyful ---- {115A}

FIRST DANAID.
Striding vigorous,
The man renewed grasps Jason in embrace

Worthy of Heracles.

ALCESTIS.
Thanks, thanks, dear queen!
We go, we go!

MEDEA.

The Goddess be your speed!
Thus will the danger pass! That vicious fool
Shall cease his plots against my best beloved.
No taint of fell complicity shall touch
My honour in this matter. I will sleep
Through the delicious hours of breezy noon,
Lulled by sweet voices of my singing maids;
Secure at least that no one will attempt
To wreck my virtue or -- restore my youth!

CHORUS.

O sleep of lazy love, be near
In dreams to lift the veil,
And silence from the shadowy sphere
To conjure in our lady's ear! --
The voices fall and fail;
The light is lowered. O dim sleep,
Over her eyelids creep!

The world of dreams is shapen fair
Beyond a mortal's nod:
A fragrant and a sunny air
Smiles: a man's kisses vanish there,
Grow kisses of a god;
And in dreams' darkness subtly grows
No Earth-flowered bloom of rose.

O dreams of love and peace, draw nigh,
Hover with shadowy wings!
Let shining shapes of ecstasy
Cover the frail blue veil of sky,
And speak immortal things!
Dream, lady, dream through summer noon,
Lulled by the sleepy tune! {115B}

The sense is riven, and the soul
Goes glimmering to the abode,

Where aeons in one moment roll,
And one thought shapes to its control
Body's forgotten load.
Our lady sleeps! Our lady smiles
In far Elysian isles!

FIRST WOMAN.

Thrice Have I crept towards the bed, and thrice
An unseen hand has caught the uplifted knife,
A grinning face lurked out from the blank air
Between me and that filthy sorceress.

SECOND WOMAN.

Daily I poison the she-devil's drink,
An nothing harms her!

THIRD WOMAN.

I have a toad whose breath
Destroys all life ----

CHORUS.

Thou dealest in such arts?

THIRD WOMAN.

Ay! for this hate's sake. Are we sisters all
Herein?

CHORUS.

True sisters!

THIRD WOMAN.

The familiar soul
Sucks at her mouth -- She sickens not nor dies;
More poisonous than he.

FIRST WOMAN.

Ah! beast of hell!
What may avail us?

SECOND WOMAN.

Jason is quite lost
In her black sorceries. {116A}

FOURTH WOMAN.

Our chance gone!

FIRST WOMAN.

Our life
Degraded to her service.

SECOND WOMAN.

We, who are
Born nobly, are become her minions.

THIRD WOMAN.

Slaves, not handmaidens!

ALCESTIS.

Ototototoi!
Ai Ai! What misery!

FIRST WOMAN.

See! the lady weeps!

ALCESTIS.

Ai Ai! the black fiend, how he dogs my feet!
The fatal day! Ai! Ai!

CHORUS.

What sorrow thus,
Maiden, removes the feet of fortitude?

ALCESTIS.

Who shall arouse him?

CHORUS.

Peace, our lady sleeps.

ALCESTIS.

Ah me! but she must wake! A black, black deed
Hangs on the house.

MEDEA.

What meets my waking ear?
Alcestis! {116B}

ALCESTIS.

Ah, dear queen, lament, lament!

I am undone by my own --

MEDEA.

What! the work?

ALCESTIS.
Alas! Alas! the work!

MEDEA.
Thy father?

ALCESTIS.
Slain!

CHORUS.
Ai Ai! the old man slain!

MEDEA.
Ai Ai!

ALCESTIS.
Ai Ai!

MEDEA.
The strong spell broken?

ALCESTIS.
Nay, but thoughts arose,
So many thoughts -- or ever I was ware --
And he -- the caldron seethes --

MEDEA.
He rises not?

ALCESTIS.
Nought but moist smoke springs up.

MEDEA.
Alas! for me!
All is but lost.

ALCESTIS.
Canst thou do anything? {117A}

MEDEA.
Nothing. Ai Ai!

ALCESTIS.
Ai Ai!

CHORUS.
Ai Ai! Ai Ai!

JASON.
What! Shall the hunter find his joy abroad,
And sorrow in his house?

MEDEA.
Thy very hearth
Polluted with the old man's blood!

ACASTUS.
What blood?
Answer me, woman!

MEDEA.
To thy knees, false hound,
Fawning to snap!

ACASTUS.
What misery, pale slaves,
Lament ye?

CHORUS.
Ah! the ill omen! Ah, the day!
Alcestis hath her sire in error slain.

ACASTUS.
Sister!

ALCESTIS.
O brother, bear thine anger back!

ACASTUS.
Speak!

ALCESTIS.
Ah, the prophecy! Ai Ai!

CHORUS.

Ai Ai! {117B}

ACASTUS.

What folly masks what wickedness? Speak on!

ALCESTIS.

I cannot speak.

JASON.

Speak thou, Medea!

MEDEA.

The child

Hath hewn her sire asunder, seething him

In herbs of sacred power.

ACASTUS.

By thy decree?

MEDEA.

Nay!

MADNESS.

Safer is it to admit to these

Fools -- charge the child with lack of fortune!

MEDEA.

Yea!

I bade her take a waxen shape, carved well

To look like the old man ----

ALCESTIS.

Nay! nay! the Sire

Himself we stole on sleeping ---

CHORUS.

Hewn apart!

Ai Ai!

MEDEA.

I said not thus!

ALCESTIS.

I am so wild,
Bewildered with these tears.

ACASTUS.
Enough of this!
It is the malice of that sorceress
Disguised - she well knows how. {118A}

CHORUS.
Thus, thus it is!
We know the witch's cunning.

JASON.
dogs and fools!
For this ye die.

MEDEA.
Nobility and love
Urge my own sanction to support the wife!

JASON.
I bade me queen prepare this spell. Disputes
Your arrogance my kingship?

ACASTUS.
Ay, indeed!
Now justice turns against thee, fickle jade
As fortune. Mine is a boy's arm, but I
Advance against thee an impervious blade,
And give thee in thy throat and teeth the lie!

JASON.
Boy's bluster!

MEDEA.
Justice will be satisfied.
It will be best to flee!

JASON.
But what is this?
A sword? I scorn a sword. I scorn a boy.
Let none suppose me fearful!

MEDEA.
give not back!

MEDEA.
I will be finer far to go away
As those disdain aught but their own love.

MEDEA.
Ay! let us leave these folk's ingratitude,
My husband! in thy love alone I rest.
This splendour and this toil alike resume
Our life from the long honeymoon of love
We wish at heart. {118B}

JASON.
To Corinth!

MEDEA.
Creon bears
The name of favourable to suppliants.

ACASTUS.
How virtue tames these tameless ones! To-day
I am indeed a man.

MEDEA.
Thou brainless boy!
Thus, thus, and thus I smite thee on the cheek --
Thus, thus I spit upon thy face. Out, dog!

SEMICHORUS I.
His patience shows as something marvellous.

SEMICHORUS. 2.
Virtue takes insult from the fortuneless.

MEDEA.
The curse of Ares dog you into Hades!
I have my reasons ["doubtfully"], ay, my reasons plain!
Going, not forced.

CHORUS.
Yet going -- that is good!

JASON.

To Corinth! Bride of my own heart, Medea,
Well hast thou put thy power off for the time
Preferring love to pomp, and peace to revel --

MEDEA.

And the soft cushions of the moss-grown trees
To royal pillows, and the moon's young light
To gaudy lamps of antique workmanship -- {119A}

JASON.

And music of the birds to harps of gold
Struck by unwilling fingers for gold coin.

MEDEA.

Come! lest the curse I call upon this house
Eat us up also! May the red plague rot
Their bones! I lift my voice and prophesy:
The curse shall never leave this house of fear;
But one by treachery shall slay another,
And vengeance shall smite one, and one lay bare
Her beasts in vain for love: until the house
Perish in uttermost red ruin.

CHORUS.

Bah!
Speared wild-cats bravely spit!

JASON.

To Creon, come!

MEDEA.

Black Ares hath chosen
Me wisely, to send
A doom deep-frozen
From now to the end.
Never the curse
Shall pass from the house,
But gather a worse
Hate for a spouse.
The lovers are better
Escaped from my toils
Than these in the fetter

Of the golden spoils.

Yet still lies a doom
For the royal lovers.
Time bears in her womb
That darkness covers
A terror, and waits
The hour that is Fate's.

The work is done. Let miracle inspire
Iolchian voices to the holy hymn,
Praise to black Ares, echo of this doom. {119B}

CHORUS.

So fearful is the wrath divine,
That once aroused it shall not sleep,
Though prostrate slaves before the shrine
Pray, praise, do sacrifice, and weep.
Ten generations following past
Shall not exhaust the curse at last.

From father unto son it flees,
An awful heritage of woe.
Wives feel its cancerous prodigies
Invade their wombs; the children know
The inexpiable word, exhaust
Not by a tenfold holocaust.

Thus let mankind abase in fear
Their hearts, nor sacrilege profane
The awful slumber of the seer,
The dread adytum of the fane;
Nor gain the mockery of a fleece,
Loosing reality of peace. {120A}

Hail to wild Ares! Men, rejoice
That He can thus avenge his shrine!
One solemn cadence of that voice
Peal through the ages, shake the spine
Of very Time, and plunge success
False-winged into sure-foot distress!

Hail to black Ares! Warrior, hail!

Thou glory of the shining sword!
What proven armour may avail

Against the vengeance of the Lord?
Athena's favour must withdraw
Before the justice of thy law!

Hail to the Lord of glittering spears,
The monarch of the mighty name,
The Master of ten thousand Fears
Whose sword is as a scarlet flame!
Hail to black Ares! Wild and pale
The echo answers me: All Hail!

EXPLICIT ACTUS QUINTUS.

{120B}

{full page below}

AHAB

AND OTHER POEMS {columns commence}

DEDICACE.

TO G. C. J.

PILGRIM of the sun, be this thy scrip!
The severing lightnings of the mind
Avail where soul and spirit slip,
And the Eye is blind.

PARIS, "December" 9, 1902.

RONDEL.

BY palm and pagoda enchanted o'er-shadowed, I lie in the light
Of stars that are bright beyond suns that all poets have vaunted
In the deep-breathing amorous bosom of forests of amazon might

By palm and pagoda enchanted.

By spells that are murmured and rays of my soul strongly flung, never

daunted;

By gesture of tracery traced with a wand dappled white;

I summon the spirits of earth from the gloom they for ages have haunted.

O woman of deep-red skin! Carved hair like the teak! O delight

Of my soul in the hollows of earth -- how my spirit hath taunted --

Away! I am here, I am laid to the breast of the earth in the dusk of the night,

By palm and pagoda enchanted. {121A}

AHAB.

PART I.

THE polished silver flings me back

Dominant brows and eyes of bronze,

A curling beard of vigorous black,

And dusky red of desert suns

Burnt in my cheeks. Who saith me Nay?

Who reigns in Israel to-day?

Samaria in well-ordered ranks

Of houses stands in honoured peace:

Sweet nourishment from Kenah's banks

Flows, and the corn and vine increase.

In two pitched fields the Syrian hordes

Fled broken from our stallion swords.

Ay me! But that was Life! I see

Now, from that hill, the ordered plain;

The serried ranks like foam flung free,

Long billows, flashing on the main.

Past the eye's grip their legions roll --

Anguish of death upon my soul!

For, sheltered by the quiet hill,

Like two small flocks of kids that wait,

Going to water, ere the chill

Flow from the East's forsaken gate,

Lie my weak spears: O trembling tide
Of fear false-faced and shifty-eyed!

God! how we smote them in the morn!

Their ravening tides rolled back anon,
As if the cedared crest uptorn
Roared from uprooted Lebanon
Down to the sea, its billows hurled
Back, past the pillars of the world! {121B}

Ah, that was life! I feel my sword
Live, bite, and shudder in my hand,
Smite, drink, the spirit of its lord
Exulting through the infinite brand!
My chariot dyed with Syrian blood!
My footmen wading through the flood!

Ay! that was life! Before the night
Dipped its cool wings, their hosts were stricken
Like night itself before the light.
An hundred thousand corpses sicken
The air of heaven. Yet some by speed
Escape our vengeance -- ours, indeed!

Fate, the red hound, to Aphek followed.
Some seven and twenty thousand died
When the great wall uprising hollowed
Its terror, crashed upon its side,
And whelmed them in the ruin. Strife,
Strength, courage, victory -- that is Life!

Then -- by my father's beard! What seer
Promised me victory? What sage
Now in my triumph hour severe
Spits out red oracles of rage?
Jehovah's. The fanatic churl
Stands -- see his thin lips writhe and curl!

"Because thou has loosed the kingly man,
To uttermost destruction's dread
In my almighty power and plan
Appointed, I will have thy head
For his, thy life for his make mine,

And for his folk thou hast spared, slay thine."

But surely I was just and wise!
Mercy is God's own attribute!
Mercy to noble enemies

Marks man from baser mould of brute,
To fight their swordsmen -- who would shirk?
To slay a captive -- coward's work!

"I have loved mercy," that He said;
Nor bade me slay the Syrian Chief.
Yet my head answers for his head;
My people take his people's grief.
Sin, troth, to spare one harmless breath,
Sith all my innocents earn death! {122A}

By timely mercy peace becomes,
And kindly love, and intercourse
Of goodly merchandise, that sums
Contention in united force.
"Praise who, relenting, sheweth pity;
Not him who captureth a city!"

A wild strong life I've made of mine.
Not till my one good deed is done --
Ay! for that very deed divine --
Comes the fierce mouth of malison.
So grows my doubt again, so swell
My ancient fears for Israel.

I hurled Jehovah's altars down;
I slew and I pursued his priests;
I took a wife from Zidon Town;
I gave his temple to the beasts;
I set up gods and graven shapes
Of calves and crocodiles and apes.

Myself to sorceries I betook;
All sins that are did I contrive,
Sealed in the Thora's dreadful book --
I live, and like my life, and thrive!
Doth God not see! His ear is dull?
Or His speech strangled, His force null?

Nay, verily! These petty sins
His mercy and long-suffering pardon.
What final crime of horror wins
At last His gracious heart to harden?
What one last infamy shall wake

His anger, for His great Name's sake?

Is there on sin so horrible
That no forgiveness can obtain,
That flings apart the bars of hell,
For which repentance shall be vain?
Ay! but there is! One act of ruth
Done in my rash unthinking youth!

Who wonders if I hold the scale
Poised in my deep deliberate mind,
Between the weight of Zidon's Baal
And Judah's God -- each in his kind
A god of power -- each in his fashion
The hideous foeman of compassion? {122B}

The blood alike of man and beast
The worship of each God demands.
All priests are greedy -- gold and feast
Pour from the poor folk to their hands.
The doubtful power from heaven to strike
The levin bolt they claim alike.

I take no heed of trickery played
By cunning mad Elijah's skill,
When the great test of strength was made
On Carmel's melancholy hill,
And on the altar-stone the liar
Cried "Water," and poured forth Greek fire!

Then while the fools peer heavenward,
Even as he prays, to see the skies
Vomit the flash, his furtive sword
Fast to the flinty altar flies.
Whoof! the wild blaze assures the clods
Jehovah is the God of gods!

Nor do I set peculiar store
By tricks twin-born to this they show
When, with well-simulated lore
Of learning, Baal's great hierarchs go
Into the gold god's graven shell
And moan the ambiguous oracle.

In my own inmost heart I feel,
Deep as a pearl in seas of Ind,
A vision, keen as tempered steel,
Lofty and holy as the wind,
And brighter than the living sun:
If these be gods, then there is none!

Baal and Jehovah, Ashtoreth
And Chemosh and these Elohim,
Life's pandars in the brothel, Death!
Cloudy imaginings, a dream
Built up of fear and words and woe.
All, all my soul must overthrow.

For these are devils, nothing doubt!
Yet nought should trouble me: I see
My folk secure from foes without,
Worship in peace and amity
Baal and Jehovah, sects appeased
By peace assured and wealth increased. {123A}

Yet am I troubled. Doubt exists
And absolute proof recoils before me.
Truth veils herself in awful mists,
And darkness wakens, rolling o'er me
When I approach the dreadful shrine,
In my own soul, of the divine.

And what cries laughing Jezebel?
Golden and fragrant as the morn,
Painted like flames adorning Hell,
Passions and mysteries outworn,
Ever enchanting, ever wise,
And terror in her wondrous eyes!

Her fascination steals my strength,

Her luxury lures me as she comes;
Reaches her length against my length,
And breaks my spirit; life succumbs --
A nameless avatar of death
Incarnate in her burning breath.

I know her gorgeous raiment folded
In snaky subtle draperies,

All stalwart captains mighty-moulded
To lure within her sorceries,
Within her bed -- and I, who love,
See, and am silent, and approve!

Strange! Who shall call the potter knave
Who moulds a vessel to his will?
One, if he choose, a black-browed slave;
One, if he choose, a thing of ill,
Writhing, misshapen, footless, cruel:
One, like a carved Assyrian jewel?

Shame on the potter heavy sit,
If he revenge his own poor skill
That marred a work by lack of wit,
By heaping infamy and ill
On the already ruined clay.
Shame on the potter, then, I say!

But what cries laughing Jezebel?
Scornful of me as all her lovers,
More scornful as we love her well!
"Good king, this rage of doubt discovers
The long-hid secret! All thy mind
A little shadow lurks behind." {123B}

Hers are the delicate sorceries
In black groves: hers the obscure, obscene
Rites in dim moonlight courts; the wise
Dreadful occasions when the queen
Like to a bat, flits, flits, to gloat
Blood-drunk upon a baby's throat!

Therefore: all doubt, this fierce unrest
Between the knowledge self bestows

And leaves of palm, and palimpsest,
Scrawled sacred scrolls, whose legend goes
Beyond recorded time, and finds
Its age beyond all history's bounds;

Therefore: all search for truth beyond
The doubtful cannon of the law,
The bitter letter of the bond
Given when Sinai shook with awe,

They swear; all wit that looks aslant
Shamed at the shameful covenant; <<1>>

<<1.Circumcision, medically commendable, is both ridiculous and obscene if
considered as a religious rite. Gen. xviii. 9-14.>>

Therefore: this brooding over truth
She much avers cuts short my day,
Steals love and laughter from my youth,
Will dye my beard in early grey.
"Go forth to war! Shall Judah still
Set mockery to thy kingly will?"

May be. I often feel a ghost
Creeping like darkness through my brain;
Sensed like uncertainty at most,
Nowise akin to fear or pain.
Yet it is there. To yield to such
And brood, will not avail me much.

Ho! harness me my chariot straight,
My white-maned horses fleet and strong!
Call forth the trumpeters of state!
Proclaim to all Samaria's throng:
The King rides forth! Hence, slaves! Away!
Haste ye! The King rides forth today. {124A}

PART II.

WOULD God that I were dead! Like Cain,
My punishment I cannot bear.
There is a deep corrosive pain
Invades my being everywhere.

Spring from a seed too small to see,
A monster spawns and strangles me.

'Tis scarce a week! In power and pride
I rode in state about the city;
Took pleasure in the eager ride,
Saw grief, took pleasure in my pity;
Say joy, took pleasure in the seeing,
And the full rapture of well-being.

Would God that I had stayed, and smote
My favourite captain through the heart,
Caught my young daughter by the throat,
And torn her life and limbs apart,
Stabbed my queen dead; remorse for these
Might aye, not match, these miseries.

For, hard behind the palace gate,
I spied a vineyard fair and fine,
Hanging with purple joy, and weight
Of golden rapture of the vine:
And there I bade my charioteer
Stay, and bid Naboth to appear.

The beast! A gray, deceitful man,
With twisted mouth the beard would hide,
Evil yet strong: the scurril clan
Exaggerate for its greed and pride,
The scum of Israel! At one look
I read my foe as in a book.

The beast! He grovelled in the dust.
I heard the teeth gride as he bowed
His forehead to the earth. Still just,
Still patient, passionless, and proud,
I ruled my heavy wrath. I passed
That hidden insult: spake at last.

I spake him fair. My memory held
Him still a member of my folk;
A warrior might be bold of eld,
My hardy spearman when we broke
The flashing lines of Syrians. Yea!

I spake him fair. Alas the day! {124B}

"Friend, by my palace lies thy field
Fruitful and pleasant to the sight.
Therefore I pray thee that thou yield
Thy heritage for my delight.
Wilt thou its better? Or its fee
In gold, as seemeth good to thee?

"Content thyself!" As by a spell
He rears his bulk in surly rage.

"The Lord forbid that I should sell
To thee my father's heritage!"
No other word. Dismissal craves? <<1>>
Nay, scowls and slinks among his slaves.

<<1. In the East the inferior dare not leave the presence of his superior
without permission.>>

Hath ever a slave in story dared
Thus to beard openly his lord?
My chariot men leapt forth and flared
Against him with indignant sword.
Why wait for king's word to expunge
Live so detested with one lunge?

"Cease!" My strong word flamed out. The men
Shook with dead fear. They jumped and caught
With savage instinct, brutal ken,
At what should be my crueller thought:
Torture! And trembled lest their haste
Had let a dear life run to waste.

They argued after their brute kind.
I have two prides; in justice, one:
In mercy, one: "No ill I find
In this just man," I cried; "the sun
Is not defiled, and takes no hurt
When the worm builds his house of dirt.

"Curse ye Jehovah! He abides,
Hears not, nor smites; the curse is pent
Close with the speaker; ill betides

When on himself the curve is bent,
And like the wild man's ill-aimed blow, <<1>>
Hits nought, swerves, swoops, and strikes him low. {125A}

<<1. Another reference to the boomerang.>>

"Let the man go!" The short surprise
Sinks in long wonder: angrily
Yet awed they spurn him forth. "Arise!
O swine, and wallow in thy sty!
The King hath said it." Thus the men
Turned the beast free -- to goad again.

For not the little shadow shapes
An image ever in my brain;
Across my field of sight there gapes
Ever a gulf, and draws the pain
Of the whole knowledge of the man
Into its vague and shifting span.

Moreover, in that gulf I see
Now the bright vineyard sweet and clean,
Now the dog Naboth mocking me
With rude curt word and mouth obscene
Wried in derision -- well relied
Dog's insolence on monarch's price.

Ah, friend! Some winds may shake a city!
Some dogs may creep too near a feast!
Thou, reckoning on my scorn, my pity,
Thine own uncleanness as a beast:
Wilt thou not take thy count again?
Seest thou the shadow on my brain?

It grows, it grows. Seven days slide past:
I groan upon an empty bed:
I turn my face away: I fast:
There cometh in my mouth no bread.
No mad dare venture near to say:
"Why turns the King his face away?"

It grows. Ah me! the long days slide;
I brood; due justice to the man

Dogging desire. A monarch's pride
Outweighs his will: yet slower ran
To-day the thought: "I will no wrong:"
"The vines are cool," more sweet and strong

There is no sleep. All natural laws
Suspend their function: strange effects
And mighty for so slight a cause!
What whim of weakling strength protects
This dog of Satan at my gate
From the full whirlwind of my hate? {125B}

What mighty weakness stays the king

If he arise, and cast desire
Far from its seat and seed and spring
To Hinnom the detested fire?
Ay! both were wise. Madness alone
Sits throned on the king's vacant throne.

Dogs! Who dares break on me? "Dread lord!
Mightiest of monarchs!" -- "Cease, thou crow!
Thine errand! ere the eunuch's sword
Snatch thy bald head off at a blow."
"Mercy, World's Light!" Swings clear and clean
The call "Room for the Queen! The Queen!"

Strong as a man, the Queen strides in.
Even she shrank frightened! -- my aspect
More dreadful than all shapes of sin
Her dreams might shape or recollect,
Hideous with fasting, madness, grief,
Beyond all speaking or belief.

But the first glance at those bold eyes!
Ah! let me fling me at her feet!
Take me, O love! Thy terror flies.
Kiss me again, again, O sweet!
O honeyed queen, old paramour,
So keen our joy be and so sure!

"The king would be alone!" Fast fly
The trembling lackeys at her voice.
Lapped in her billowy breasts I lie,

And love, and languish, and rejoice,
And -- ah -- forget! The ecstatic hour
Bursts like a poppy into flower.

Back! thou black spectre! In her arms
Devouring and devoured of love,
Feeding my face in myriad charms,
As on a mountain feeds a dove,
Starred with fresh flowers, dew-bright, and pearled
With all the light of all the world: {126A}

Back! With the kisses ravening fast
Upon my panting mouth, the eyes
Darting hot showers of light, the vast

And vicious writings, the caught sighs
Drunk with delight, on love's own throne,
The moment where all time lies prone:

Back! At the very central shrine,
Pinnacled moment of excess
Of immolation's blood divine:
Back! from the fleshy loveliness:
Back! loved and loathed! O face concealed!
Back! One hath whispered "Naboth's field."

I am slain. Her body passion-pearled
Dreams her luxurious lips have drawn
My spirit, as the dust wind-whirled
Sucks up the radiance of the dawn
In rainbow beauty<<1>> -- yet remains
Mere dust upon the barren plains.

<<1. "Dust-devils" show opalescence in certain aspects of light.>>

Reluctance to reveal my grief
Is of my sickness a strange feature.
Yea, verily! beyond belief
Is the machinery of man's nature!
If thus spake Solomon in kind
Of body, I of soul and mind!

The lazy accents stir at last
The scented air: "Oh, wherefore, lord,

Is thy soul sad? This weary fast
Strikes to my heart a lonely sword!"
In brief words stammered forth I spoke
My secret; and the long spell broke.

And now the gilded sin of her
Leapt and was lambent in a smile:
"Give me but leave to minister
This kingdom for a little while!
The vineyard shall be thine. O king,
This trouble is a little thing!" {126B}

I gave to her the signet's gold
Carved in the secret character,
Whose flowers of writing bend and fold

The star of Solomon, the eye
Whence four rays run -- the Name! the seal
Written within the burning wheel.

And now I lean with fevered will
Across the carven screen of palm.
All nature holds its function still;
The sun is mild; the wind is calm;
But on my ear the voices fall
Distant, and irk me, and appal.

Two men have sworn the solemn oath:
"God and the king this dog blasphemed,"
Two judges, just, though little loth,
Weigh, answer. As on one who dreamed
Comes waking -- in my soul there groaned:
"Carry forth Naboth to be stoned!"

Nine days! And still the king is sad,
And hides his face, and is not seen.
The tenth! the king is gaily clad;
The king will banquet with the queen;
And, ere the west be waste of sun,
Enjoy the vinyard he hath won.

All this I hear as one entranced.
The king and I are friend and friend,
As if a cloud of maidens danced

Between my vision and the end.
I see the king as one afeared,
Hiding his anguish in his beard.

I laugh in secret, knowing well
What waits him in the field of blood;
What message hath the seer to tell;
What bitter Jordan holds its flood
Only for Ahab, sore afraid
What lurks behind the vine's cool shade.

Yet -- well I see -- the fates are sure,
And Ahab will descend, possess
The enchanting green, the purple lure,
The globes of nectared loveliness,
And, as he turns! who wonders now

The grim laugh wrinkles on my brow? {127A}

I see him, a fantastic ghost,
The vineyard smiling white and plain,
And hiding ever innermost
The little shadow on his brain;
I laugh again with mirthless glee,
As knowing also I am he.

A fool in gorgeous attire!
An ox decked bravely for his doom!
So step I to the great desire.
Sweet winds upon the gathering gloom
Bend like a mother, as I go,
Foreknowing, to my overthrow.

NEW YEAR, 1903.

O FRIENDS and brothers! Hath the year deceased,
And ye await the bidding to fare well?
How shall ye fare, thus bound of fate in hell?
How, whom no light hath smitten, and released?
Yet trust perchance in God, or man, or priest?
Ay! Let them serve you, let them save you! Spell
The name that guards the human citadel,
And answer if your course hath checked or ceased.

Path of the eightfold star! Be thou revealed!
Isle of Nirvana, be the currents curled
About thee, that the swimmer touch thy shore!
Thought be your sword, and virtue be your shield!
Press on! Who conquers shall for evermore
Pass from the fatal mischief of the world.

MELUSINE.
TO M. M. M.

HANGS over me the fine false gold
Above the bosom epicene
That hides my head that hungereth.
The steady eyes of steel behold,
When on a sudden the fierce and thin

Curled subtle mouth swoops on my breath, {127B}
And like a serpent's mouth is cold,
And like a serpent's mouth is keen,
And like a serpent's mouth is death.

Lithe arms, wan with love's mysteries,
Creep round and close me in, as Thule
Wraps Arctic oceans ultimate;
Some deathly swoon or sacrifice,
This love -- a red hypnotic jewel
Worn in the forehead of a Fate!
And like a devil-fish is ice,
And like a devil-fish is cruel,
And like a devil-fish is hate.

Beneath those kisses songs of sadness
Sob, in the pulses of desire,
Seeking some secret in the deep;
Low melodies of stolen gladness,
The bitterness of death; the lyre
Broken to bid the viol weep:
And like a Maenad's chants are madness,
And like a Maenad's chants are fire,
And like a Maenad's chants are sleep.

A house of pain is her bedchamber.

Her skin electric clings to mine,
Shakes for pure passion, moves and hisses;
Whose subtle perfumes half remember
Old loves, and desolate divine
Wailings among the wildernesses;
And like a Hathor's skin is amber,
And like a Hathor's skin is wine,
And like a Hathor's skin is kisses.

Gray steel self-kindled shine her eyes.
They rede strange runes of time defiled,
And ruined souls, and Satan's kin.
I see their veiled impurities,
An harlot hidden in a child,
Through all their love and laughter lean;
And like a witch's eyes are wise,
And like a witch's eyes are wild,
And like a witch's eyes are Sin.

She moves her breasts in Bacchanal
Rhymes to that music manifold
That pulses in the golden head, {128A}
Seductive phrase perpetual,
Terrible both to change or hold;
They move, but all their light is fled;
And like a dead girl's breasts are small,
And like a dead girl's breasts are cold,
And like a dead girl's breasts are dead.

Forests and ancient haunts of sleep
See dawn's intolerable spark
While yet fierce darkness lingereth.
So I, their traveller, sunward creep,
Hail Ra uprising in his bark,
And feel the dawn-wind's sombre breath.
Strange loves rise up, and turn, and weep!
Our warm wet bodies may not mark
How these spell Satan's shibboleth
And like a devil's loves are deep,
And like a devil's loves are dark,
And like a devil's loves are death.

THE DREAM.

BEND down in dream the shadow-shape
Of tender breasts and bare!
Let the long locks of gold escape
And cover me and fall and drape
A pall of whispering hair!
And let the starry eyes look through
That mist of silken light,
And lips drop forth their honey-dew
And gentle sighs of sleep renew
The scented winds of night!
As purple clusters of pure grapes
Distil their dreamy wine
Whose fragrance from warm fields escapes
On shadowy hills and sunny capes
In lands of jessamine!
So let thy figure faintly lined
In pallid flame of sleep

With love inspire the dreamer's mind,
Young love most delicate and kind,
With love -- how calm and deep!
Let hardly half a smile revive
The thoughts of waking hours.
How sad it is to be alive!
How well the happy dead must thrive
In green Elysian bowers! {128B}
A sleep as deep as their bestow,
Dear angel of my dreams!
Bid time now cease its to-and-fro
That I may dwell with thee, and know
The soul from that which seems!
The long hair sobs in closer fold
And deeper curves of dawn;
The arms bend closer, and the gold
Burns brighter, and the eyes are cold
With life at last withdrawn.
And all the spirit passing down
Involves my heart with gray:
So the pale stars of even crown
The glow of twilight; dip and drown
The last despairs of day.
Oh! closer yet and closer yet

The pearl of faces grows.
The hair is woven like a net
Of moonlight round me: sweet is set
The mouth's unbudded rose.
Oh never! did our lips once meet
The dream were done for ever,
And death should dawn, supremely sweet,
One flash of knowledge subtle and fleet
Borne on the waveless river. {129A}
And therefore in the quiet hour
I rose from lily pillows
And swiftly sought the jasmine bower
Still sleeping, moonlight for a dower,
And bridal wreaths of willows.
And there I laid me down again:
The stream flowed softly by:
And thought the last time upon pain,
Earth's joy -- the sad permuted strain
Of tears and ecstasy.
And there the dream came floating past

Borne in an ivory boat,
And all the world sighed low "At last."
The shallop waited while I cast
My languid limbs afloat
To drift with eyelids skyward turned
Up to the shadowy dream
Shaped like a lover's face, that burned;
To drift toward the soul that yearned
For this -- the hour supreme!
So drifting I resigned the sleep
For death's diviner bliss;
As mists in rain of springtide weep,
Life melted in the dewfall deep
Of death's kiss in a kiss. {129

{full page below}

THE GOD-EATER<<1>>

1903

<<1. For the foundations of this play the student may consult any modern treatises on Sociology.>>

[The idea of this obscure and fantastic play is as follows: --

By a glorious act human misery is secured (History of Christianity).

Hence, appreciation of the personality of Jesus is no excuse for being a Christian.

Inversely, by a vile and irrational series of acts human happiness is secured (Story of the play).

Hence, attacks on the Mystics of History need not cause us to condemn Mysticism.

Also, the Knowledge of Good and Evil is a Tree whose fruit Man has not yet tasted: so that the Devil cheated Eve indeed; or (more probably) Eve cheated Adam. Unless (most probable of all) God cheated the Devil, and the fruit was a common apple after all. Cf. H. Maudsley, "Life in Mind and Conduct."]

{columns commence}

"PERSONS."

CRIOSDA, "aged" 33.

MAURYA, "his sister, aged" 16.

RUPHA, "the Hag of Eternity."

"The scene of the Tragedy is laid in an ancient Scottish Hall, very remote".

"The time is the One-and-Twentieth Century after Christ."

"The action of the play occupies many years."

THE GOD-EATER.

ACT I.

CRIOSDA, MAURYA.

["The Scene is an old Baronial Hall, elaborately, yet somewhat grotesquely (from the incongruity), fitted up as an antique Egyptian temple.

Centre: an altar between two obelisks; on it a censer vomits smoke in great volumes. Above at back of stage is a stately throne, square and simple, on steps. In it sits" MAURYA, "quiet and silent. She is dressed in sombre green robes, lightened with old rose facings. She

is heavily braceleted and ankleted with gold, and her crown is a gold disc, supported in silver horns, rising" {130A} "from her forehead. Above her is a rude painted board, representing the Winged Globe in many colours. Before the altar" CRIOSDA "is kneeling; he is dressed in a white robe fastened by a blue sash. A leopard's skin is over his shoulders, clasped with a golden clasp about his neck. He bears an "ankh" in his left hand, in his right a caduceus<<1>> wand. On his head is the winged helmet of Mercury, and his sandals are winged also. He is muttering low some fervent prayer, and anon casts incense upon the censer. The low muttering continues for a considerable time," MAURYA "remaining quite still, as one rapt in her own thoughts. Suddenly, with startling vehemence, the song breaks out."

<<1. The wand of Mercury.>>

CRIOSDA.

HAIL! HAIL! HAIL!

[MAURYA, "startled, looks up and half rises. Then sits again, with a strange sweet smile of innocence and tenderness."

CRIOSDA. ["Lower."]

The world is borne upon thy breast
Even as the rose. {130B}

Wilt thou not lull it into rest,
Some strong repose
More satisfying than pale sleep;
Than death more long, more deep?

Hail! at the twilight as at dawn!
The sunset close
Even on the lake as on the lawn!
The red ray glows
Across the woven stardrift's ways
In mystery of Maurya's praise.

Hear me, thy priest, at eventide!
These subtler throes
Than love's or life's, invade, divide
The world of woes.

Thy smile, thy murmur of delight, be enough
To fill the world with life and love!

["He bends over into deep reverence, yet with the air of one expecting a grace."

[MAURYA, "like one in trance, rises slowly, gathers her robes about

her, and descends to the altar. Reaching over it, she bends and lifts him by his outstretched arms. She puts her lips to his forehead, and he, with a deep gasp, as of one in ecstasy not to be borne, drops back, breathing deeply. She lifts her hands, and brings them slowly, very forcibly, forward, and says solemnly:"

The Blessing of Maurya.

Blessed be the House of the Servants of Maurya.

Blessed be the Stones of the House.

Blessed be the Tree of the House.

Blessed be the Food of the House.

Blessed be the Men of the House.

Blessed be all the Universe for their sakes.

The Blessing of Maurya.

["A short silence."

[MAURYA "goes back and lays her crown and robes on the throne. She is now dressed in wonderful close-fitting crimson silk, trimmed with ermine. Her bronze-gold hair is coiled wonderfully about her head." {131A} "She comes down stage to" CRIOSDA, "who rises on one knee and takes her thereon. She removes his helmet and strokes gently his hair."

Criosda, my brother!

CRIOSDA. Maurya, little sister!

["He smiles with deep tenderness; suddenly a pang catches him; he

strikes at his throat, and cries sharply:"

Ah! ["Shivers with terrible emotion."

MAURYA. Criosda, ever the same! The old world runs

On Wheels of laughter for us little ones;

To you, whose shoulders strain, the chariot seems

A poised fiend flogging you to hell.

CRIOSDA. These thoughts,

Maurya, -- Maurya! they become you not.

Child, to see sorrow is to taste it.

MAURYA. No;

For such a sorrow is its own calm joy.

But -- share me now your pain.

CRIOSDA. ["In agony."] No! no! not that!

MAURYA. ["Smiling."] The priest has secrets from the goddess?

CRIOSDA.

["With a cry as of physical pain, deadly sharp."

Stop!

No jesting there.

MAURYA. I did not mean to jest.

As brother to sister?

CRIOSDA. Ah! that hurts, that hurts.

MAURYA. I am heavy?

CRIOSDA. Heavy as my own heart's fear.

MAURYA. You fear? Am I in fault? Is Maurya maid
The foe to Maurya goddess?

CRIOSDA. Ah, indeed!

MAURYA. Is not the work nigh ready?

[CRIOSDA "grips his caduceus, which he has dropped, and presses it savagely to his breast. Then, with a mingled burst of ferocity and joy, dashes" MAURYA "aside to the ground, reaches his hand towards the empty throne, apostrophising it, and cries with a strident laugh;" {131B}

CRIOSDA. Ay, to-night!

["A spasm overcomes him and he falls prone."

MAURYA. Criosda! You are ill, ill! Help!

["He is silent; she unclasps the leopard's skin, and busies herself in trying to restore him."

Janet! Angus! Angus!

["Under her breath."

Angus is the man -- he saved poor Kenneth!

["Aloud."

Angus! Oh, miserable! No help comes here.

Criosda! wake! wake! --

Oh, I must take him out -- no man may enter here! -- It is ill luck. Old

Andrew found the passage! and the next day he was dead -- murdered, murdered! Oh, how horrible! -- what a horrible place this is with all its beauty and love! and my worship -- oh, how strange it all is. Criosda! come!

["She begins to carry him to the great door, then notices his white robe."

This must come off: they must not see the holy robes.

Criosda! my darling dear brother, do look at me!

["She has removed his robes." CRIOSDA "is now seen to be dressed in a dark-green tartan kilt and quasi-military tunic with silver buttons. A dirk hangs at his side. Its hilt is of unusual shape, being surmounted by the circle and cross familiar to visitors to Iona."

Criosda! Ah yes, look up, look up!

How pale you are! There is no blood in your lips.

CRIOSDA.

["Starting violently from her arms."

Blood! Blood!

MAURYA. Lie still, dear, you are ill. Now! That is better. Come --

can you walk a little? -- we will get Angus to help.

CRIOSDA. No! No! I am well! I am well! Go, go!

If you love me, go. I cannot bear it longer. {132A}

Your presence is my pain. There is nothing here.

Nothing -- leave me!

MAURYA. Criosda, my own brother!

CRIOSDA. Go! O devil! Devil! Maurya!

["He reaches out a threatening arm against the empty throne.

Suddenly, with an inarticulate noise in his throat, he again collapses."]

MAURYA. Oh! Oh! he must come out and be tended. Where is the lever?

Here --

["Still supporting him on one arm, she raises a ponderous knocker and lets it fall. A clang, sombre, and of surprising volume, resounds. The door slowly opens of itself."]

CRIOSDA. ["Recovering."] Who is at the door? Back, back. It is ill luck, ill luck, I say. Where is old Andrew? The faithful fool -- Oh, the last dreadful look of his glazed eyes! What am I saying? Maurya, girl, go! I must tend the temple. I must be alone. It is not fitting --

MAURYA. You are ill; come and be tended yourself, first.

CRIOSDA. No! I am well. You are a girl, not a God.

MAURYA. Oh! Oh! Have I done amiss? Am I not ----

CRIOSDA. Stop, don't!

["Aside."] I must be man -- tut! tut!

["Aloud."] Why, little sister, know

Those whom we worship as our gods are gods.

The power is mine: that art no skill resists.

No God dethrones himself; none can.

Will he, nill he, God must be God: it is a luckless fate for a girl's dower, a thankless way for a maiden's feet.

MAURYA. Why, then, am I not the Goddess Maurya?

CRIOSDA. Yes! yes! of course, but only by my making.

MAURYA. Was not my birth miraculous? and strange

The death of the old people of this house

That left you guardian?

CRIOSDA. Yes, girl, that was strange. {132B}

MAURYA. Then, is the power that makes me in the end

True Goddess Maurya, yours, yours only?

CRIOSDA. ["Solemnly."] No!

Stop! ask no more! There lies the awful crux.

Blind are fate's eyes, and pinioned are will's wings.

In you the whole chance lies.

MAURYA. In me?

CRIOSDA. In you.

MAURYA. I will do all to win!

CRIOSDA. Do all?

MAURYA. Do all.

CRIOSDA. Ah then! No, no, it is not yet enough.

Not definite yet. Stop! fool, shall I hint and ruin all with a word?

Backwards or forwards, the blow goes home either way. ["Looks at her with keen fierce eyes."] Ah!

MAURYA. ["A little frightened."] Come, O my brother!

It is time to go.

CRIOSDA. No! leave me. It is but an hour.

[MAURYA "smiles; leaves her hand a little in his, and so passes out slowly through the open door with her eyes fixed in love and trust on him." CRIOSDA "starts up and pulls fiercely at a second lever, and the door clangs to with the same nerve shattering shock."

CRIOSDA "staggers to altar; and, with his hand on it, turns towards door."

Mouths of God's mercy! I would her eyes were bleeding wounds in my heart! Ah though! If she were a dog I could not do it. She is my sister

["Turns with a cry to throne and flings up his hands." and I will!

Death! Death!

It is a year to-night. I arrayed her first

In yon gold ornaments -- My brain is sick!

I want coffee -- or hashish -- No! That is for her!

I must be very clear and calm, very clear, very calm, {133A}

How I must be ill --

["Correcting himself with effort."] Ill I must be. Ha!

["Goes to altar, opens it, takes out a flask filled with a clear pale blue liquor with rosy stars of light in it, pours it into a long vial, and holds it to the light. The room is lighted by electricity, the globes being the eyes of strange sculptured stone beasts on the walls."

So far the story is true.

["Drink a little"

Why, that is better already. I am again the priest of Maurya -- who is the brother of Maurya? A trivial ape o' the time! -- cold, logical to a fault! -- Ay! and a crime, a crime at which the stars shake in the heaven, men might think. Yet the stars, I will wager, are indifferent. True, the news has not reached them: true, that star I see is not a star; it was so six, ten, twenty thousand years ago -- logical, I say! -- and I will drink, for parenthetical is a poor substitute --

["Drinks."

Why, how thou fir'st me! with that icy fire
Of adamant thought. It well befits this hour
If I recoil the chain whose last smooth link
Slides o'er Time's cogwheel. In the beginning then
The vastness of heavens and the earth
Created the idea of God. So Levi once
Sarcastic in apostasy; "a rebours."
So Muller, mythopoeic in his mood
Of the unmasking mythopoeia. Now
Profounder science, Spencer's amplitude,
Allen's too shallow erudition, Frazer's
Research, find men have made -- since men made aught --
Their Gods, and slain, and eaten. Surface! I,
Criosda of the Mist, see truth in all
Rather than truth in one. Below the rite,
The sight! Beyond the priest, the power! Above
The sense, the soul! So men who made their gods {133B}
Did make in very deed: so I will make
In uttermost truth a new god, since the old
Are dead, or drunk with wine, and soma-juce
And hemp and opium! Maurya, thou shalt be!
So for long years I have dared. First the twin death
Of the dotards, slow constraint of Maurya's mind
To the one end. Next, study: next, research
In places long-forgotten of the West,
Deep hidden of the East; the perfect rite

Dragged by laborious hand and brain to shape
And this ["Raises glass"] the first fruits! Hail, thou fount of wit,
Light liquor, child of cares how heavy! Drink!
The peace of the Priest!

["He drinks up the liquor."

Be thou my light!

Uncloud the misty channels of the mind!
Off, horror! Off, compassion! Be the brain
The almighty engine of the Will -- and those
Subtler and deeper forces grimly guessed,
Terribly proven -- be they strong thereby!
Awake, O sleeping serpent of the soul,
Unhinted skills, and unimagined powers,
And purposes undreamed of!

["He goes now calmly about the temple, arranging all he ornaments.
He empties the censer."]

Shadowy influence

Of smoke! Where lies its physiologic act?

What drug conceals the portent? Mystery!

Mystery ninefold closed upon itself

That matter should move mind -- Ay! darker yet

That mind should work on matter? And the proof

Extant, implicit in the thought thereof!

Else all our work were vain. These twain be one;

And in their essence? Deeper, deeper yet

I dive.

["He draws the dirk and tests the point."

And will to-morrow show me aught?

["He extinguishes the lamps, goes to the door and opens it. The clang startles him." {134A}

I hate that door! Strange that the outer air

Should bring back manhood! Man, thou pitiest her!

Man, thou art whelmed in that red tide of lust

That rolls over strong loathing by vast will,

Hideous rapture of death. That's for thee, man!

Thine are the scalding tears of sympathy,

The tender love for the young flower. And these

Are none of the priest's. Enough!

["Exit. The door clangs again. The curtain falls; a scene drops"

RUPHA, "an aged and wizened hag, of gigantic stature, is discovered

seated, C. The scene represents a lonely hill-top covered with

stones. A little coarse grass grows in places. Three great

menhirs stand up, C. Moonlight."

RUPHA. The rune of the breath.

The saga of death.

The secret of earth.

The beginning of birth.

The speech of woe.

Ho! Ho!

I scent the prey.

I sniff the air.

The dawn of day

Makes Maurya May

The Goddess rare.

The light of the stars

Be hers; go, go,

Ye silent folk,

Harness your cars!

Brace the yoke!
It is time to Know.
Ho! Ho!

Desolate deeds!
She bleeds, she bleeds.
The golden head
Is drooped for aye.
She is dead, she is dead.
She is God, and I? {134B}
I am might.
I am power.
I am light
For an hour.
I am strong, I grow.
Ho! Ho!

I taught Criosda
The evil runes.
Mine were the tunes
His passion sang.
Mine is the clang
Of the olden door.
Half the secret
I gave: no more!
Half the secret
Hidden I keep.
Hide it deep!
That is mine!

I will work.
He is nought.
The runes divine
Awry be wrought.
Hail to the murk!
["A distant whine is heard."
Cover me! Lurk,
Rupha, lurk!
'Tis a foe.
Ho! Ho!
["Clouds have been obscuring the moon; it is now dark. A fox passes
over the stage."
Crafty! Crafty!
That is the omen.

Fear not the foemen!

["She rises up."

Mine is the spoil
Of the grimly toil.

Gloomy, gloomy!

Ah! but I laugh.

He is but a fool.

He has lost!

He is lost!

Take the staff!

Trace the rule

Of the circle crossed!

["she makes a circle and a cross therein." {135A}

No light therein!

Mother of sin,

Thou hast won!

Death to the sun!

Hail to the glow

Of the corpse decayed!

Hail to the maid!

Ho! Ho!

["She rambles about the stage, muttering savage runes with dismal laughter. Her words are inarticulate, when with a last" Ho! Ho!

"the curtain falls."

["The scene rises, and we again see the stage as in" Scene I. MAURYA
"and" CRIOSDA "as in the opening." CRIOSDA "is, however, absolutely
calm."

MAURYA. Criosda, answer!

CRIOSDA. I obey, having heard.

MAURYA. This dawn shall see me take the final flight?

CRIOSDA. It shall.

MAURYA. I shall be taken utterly from earth?

CRIOSDA. So.

MAURYA. Ye abide with thee, my priest.

CRIOSDA. Ay! Ay!

MAURYA. I feel no early prompting thither.

CRIOSDA. No. It is sudden.

MAURYA. What then lacks?

CRIOSDA. A draught: a word.

MAURYA. Where is the draught?

CRIOSDA. This incense in my hand.

MAURYA. What is the word?

[CRIOSDA "is silent."

Criosda, answer me.

CRIOSDA. To invoke death it were to answer this.

MAURYA. Ah, then, forbear!

[CRIOSDA "is silent."

How shall I know the word?

CRIOSDA. Good luck may bring it to the light.

MAURYA. Ill luck?

CRIOSDA. A year's delay.

MAURYA. Ah, let me gain one gift {135B}

Whose sweet reversion hangs above me now:

To order luck!

CRIOSDA. Skill orders luck!

MAURYA. The draught!

CRIOSDA. Hither, O Maurya!

MAURYA. I will come to thee.

[CRIOSDA, "taking hashish, throws it upon the glowing censer." MAURYA "comes down stage and bends over it." CRIOSDA "lifts it up and offers it reverently."

MAURYA. Methinks anticipation o' the event

Shoots in my veins, darting delight.

Why, this is strange!

I am losing myself. Criosda!

The walls of the world fall back with a crash.

Where is all this? I am out of myself: I expand

O Maurya, where art thou, little phantom of myriads of ages ago? What a memory! Ah! Ah! She is falling.

[MAURYA "staggers." CRIOSDA, "who has been watching her narrowly, catches her and lays her tenderly on the altar."

Oh, what happiness, what happiness! Criosda, dear brother, how I love you!

I wish to sleep for ever -- I wish to die!

[CRIOSDA, "who has been bending over her, leaps up, shrieks."

CRIOSDA. The luck of Maurya!

["He draws quickly his dirk; it flashes on high, he leaps on to the body of" MAURYA, "and plunges it into her heart."

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

FORTY YEARS AFTERWARDS.

"The scene is an open and stormy sea." RUPHA, "with her staff, wave-riding in a cockle shell."

RUPHA. Ha! Ha!
In the storm
I ride. {136A}
The winds bear me.
The waves fear me.
I appal; I inform
Their pride.
Let him hither,
Drifting ever
Wrecked and lost!
His life shall wither.
The dirk shall sever
His rune ill-crossed.

I hear him come
Across the foam
With a bang and a boom.
The winds, hum, hum.
The billows comb.
Ho! Ho! the doom!
Ho! Ho! I have won.
I shall win.
Death to the sun!
Life to sin!
They reap who sow.
Ho! Ho!

["A boat drifts in, L. In it the aged" CRIOSDA, "his white hair afloat in the storm is standing with folded arms. His eyes are dull, as seeing inward."]

RUPHA. Ha! Ha!
'Tis the priest.
Dost think
O' the feast?
Criosda, shrink!
The rune is woe.
Ho! Ho!
CRIOSDA. Mother of Sin!
RUPHA. Ho! Ho!
CRIOSDA. Thus then at last the Luck of Maurya throws
A double-six to lost Criosda.

RUPHA. Ho!

The Luck of Maurya!

The power of the deed.

CRIOSDA. I find thee, mother, at last. Life's final flash

Gleams through the storm.

RUPHA. I am found!

Ho! Ho! {136B}

CRIOSDA. What of the power? I bid these waves be calm

In Maurya's name.

["The storm increases momentarily in violence." RUPHA "mutters on."

CRIOSDA "shows with a gesture that he knows his words avail nothing."

RUPHA. Ho! Ho!

CRIOSDA. I wittingly and well resumed the rite

Learnt at thy breast, old wolf!

RUPHA. Ho! Ho!

The might is mine

O' the rune divine.

Silence, winds!

Peace, ye waves!

The spell binds

Their wrath

In the graves

Below ocean.

Clear the path!

Cease your motion?

Swift, be slow!

Ho! Ho!

["The storm ceases."

CRIOSDA. "Thy" words avail then?

RUPHA. Ha! Ha!

They avail.

I avail.

Did Rupha fail,

All would be done.

Death to the sun!

I know.

Ho! Ho!

CRIOSDA. All this I did for thee?

RUPHA. Ha! Ha!

What didst thou do?

Ha! Ha!

Ha! Ha!

CRIOSDA. What did I not do? All!

RUPHA. Tell! Tell!

'Tis a spell.

CRIOSDA. I will tell all. O sea, swallow me up
With the last word!

RUPHA. It obeys?

No! No!

Ho! Ho! {137A}

CRIOSDA. Thou sinister one! Thy rite I duly did;
That drugged (and dancing with delight thereof
The maiden's mind) the maiden's body prone
Lay on her altar. Then she gave consent,
And I smote once.

RUPHA. Ha! Ha!

What came them?

CRIOSDA. I tore out her heart,
And held its flame aloft. The blackening blood
Gushed on my arms -- and then --

RUPHA. Ho! HO!

CRIOSDA. With red lips reeking from the sweet foul feast,
I sang in tuneless agony the spell;
Rolled athwart space the black words: then some force
Tore me: I heard the tears drop in my heart.
I heard the laughter of some utmost God
Hid in the middle of matter. That was I,
The hideous laughter of the maniac laugh
When loathing makes the bed to lust, and twine
The limbs of agony about the trunk
Of torture -- rapture stabbing through -- Maurya!
Ay, that was I; ,and I the weeping wolf
That howls about this hell that is my heart;
And I the icy and intangible
That beholds all, and is not.
RUPHA. Three in one!

One in three!

Death to the sun!

Glory to thee!

Thou wast there!

Enough!

It will grow.

Ho! Ho!

CRIOSDA. In English, I was mad. But no new portents
Confound the course of the sun. I left my home

To seek thee out. When skill availed me not,
I put to sea to try the Luck of Maurya. {137B}
RUPHA. Thou shouldst have tried that first of all.
CRIOSDA. Why then
The Luck may avail if that wried tongue can speak
Straight! Hast thou aught to bid me do?
To me naught matters more. My life I cast
On the one throw; and, having lost, I have lost.
I am indifferent to my fate as the stars
Are to my curses, were I fool enough
To curse.
RUPHA. Destiny has strange ways.
CRIOSDA. I care not.
RUPHA. How long hast thou left home?
CRIOSDA. Seven years.
RUPHA. Return!
CRIOSDA. How can I?
RUPHA. Stamp the boat beneath thy feet
Down wallowing in the trough!
CRIOSDA. It is done!
["The boat sinks from under" CRIOSDA. "He would sink did he not grasp
the staff extended to him."
RUPHA. Now, stand alone!
CRIOSDA. I stand.
RUPHA. Then break, O vision
Of sea; awake, O vision of the shrine!
CRIOSDA. All is illusion?
RUPHA. All. Murder a mode
And love a mode of the unknown that is,
That nor thyself nor I can ever see.
Yet, so far as may be, awake, O shrine!
["She strikes the sea with her staff; the storm rises; it grows
bitter dark; only their shapes are dimly seen against the dark
background of cloud. The scene rises."
RUPHA. Break, break, O mist of morning!

["The stage, which is full of mist, gradually clears. It shows the
Temple as in" Scene I. "On the throne the embalmed body of" MAURYA
"is seated. The altar flames with glowing charcoal, and a thin
steam of incense arises." RUPHA "and" CRIOSDA "are in front, R. Two
priests minister; a goodly" {138A} "crew of choristers intone low
litanies. A few young folk are at a barrier by the footlights
(centre) in prayer. An old woman enters and brings an offering of
flowers, which the priests receive and cast before the throne."

RUPHA "motions" CRIOSDA "to be silent."

1ST PRIEST. Glory unto thee, Maurya, secret Lady of the Stars!

CHORISTERS. Who was born on earth!

2ND PRIEST. Glory unto thee, Maurya, Lady of Life!

CHORISTERS. Who didst die for us!

ALL. Glory for ever unto Maurya!

THE WORSHIPPING FOLK. Maurya, hear us!

["All bend deeper and deeper in adoration. Silence awhile. They rise, and the priests see" RUPHA "and" CRIOSDA.

1ST PRIEST. ["Whispers."] It is the Mother of our Lady.

2ND PRIEST. ["Whispers."] Who is with her?

1ST PRIEST. ["Whispers."] The first disciple.

2ND PRIEST. ["Whispers."] Blessed is this day, O brother!

1ST PRIEST. ["Whispers."] Let us go and do them reverence.

["They approach" RUPHA "and" CRIOSDA, "and bend low before them."

RUPHA. Criosda! Of one act the ultimatum

Rings through eternity past the poles of space.

Choose then what spangle on the robe of time

Shall glitter in thine eyes: for the hour strikes.

CRIOSDA. Mother! I would see the Luck of Maurya stand

Two thousand years from now.

RUPHA. Good priest, bring forth

The globe of crystal.

1ST PRIEST. Hearing is enough.

["The priest takes a crystal from out the altar, and places it thereupon." RUPHA "and" CRIOSDA "advance."

RUPHA. Look! I uplift the veil.

["She unveils the crystal." {138B}

CRIOSDA. I see a lofty pyramid sun-white

Blaze in immaculate glory to the stars;

Its splendour of itself, since all is dark

About, above. Thereon a countless folk,

Multitudes many-coloured, grave and tall,

Beautiful, make a beautiful murmur, move,

In infinite musical labyrinths about.

Them doth the soul of love inhabit, them

The light of wisdom doth inform, them peace

Hath marked and sealed her own. But on their lips

Is one imagined silence like a sigh.

Unanimous the hushed harmony

Flows forth from heart to mouth; and mouths bloom red

With ripe and royal repetition; kisses

Flow like thick honey-drops in honeysuckle.

That is their worship.

RUPHA. Whom then worship they? {139A}

CRIOSDA. Maurya!

["Recalled to himself, he perceives the meaning of this; with a great cry breaks forward and stands before the throne, raises himself up and says in triumph and knowledge of peace:"

Then -- I have lived!

["Reaches out his hand towards the enthroned mummy."

Maurya!

["With the last terrible cry he collapses, and falls dead with his head on" MAURYA'S knees.

RUPHA. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end.

["She deliberately breaks her staff in her hands. The report is sharp and very loud, like a pistol shot." {139B}

{Full page below}

CURTAIN.

{139}

THE SWORD OF SONG

CALLED BY CHRISTIANS

THE BOOK OF THE BEAST

1904

TO MY OLD FRIEND AND COMRADE IN THE ART

BHIKKHU ANANDA METTEYA

AND TO THOSE

FOOLS

WHO BY THEIR SHORT-SIGHTED STUPIDITY IN
ATTEMPTING TO BOYCOTT THIS BOOK
HAVE WITLESSLY AIDED THE
CAUSE OF TRUTH

I DEDICATE THESE MY BEST WORDS

[This book is so full of recondite knowledge of various kinds that it seems quite ineffective to annotate every obscure passage. Where references and explanations can be concisely given, this has been done.]

{columns commence}

"YOU are said!" the Knight said, in an anxious tone; "let me sing you a song to comfort you."<>

"Is it very long" Alice asked.

"It's long," said the Knight, "but it's 'very very' beautiful. The name of the song is called 'The Book of the Beast.'"

"Oh! how ugly!" cried Alice.

"Never mind," said the mild creature. "'Some' people call it 'Reason in Rhyme.'"

"But which 'is' the name of the song?" Alice said, trying not to seem too interested.

"Ah, you don't understand," the Knight said, looking a little vexed. "That's what the name is 'called.' The name really 'is' 'Ascension Day and Pentecost; with some Prose Essays and an Epilogue,' just as the title is 'The Sword of Song' you know, just in the same way, just in the same way, just in the same way . . ."

Alice put her fingers in her ears and gave a little scream. "Oh, dear me! That's {140A} harder than ever!" she said to herself, and then, looking determinedly intelligent: "So 'that's' what the song is called. I see. But what 'is' the song?"

"You must be a perfect fool," said the Knight, irritably. "The song is called 'Shout Doubt; or the Agnostic's Anthology,' by the author of 'Gas Manipulation,' 'Solutions,' 'The Management of Retorts,' and other physical works of the first order -- but that's only what it's 'called,' you know."

"Well, what 'is' the song then?" said Alice, who was by this time completely bewildered.

"If I wished to be obscure, child," said the Knight, rather contemptuously, "I should tell you that the Name of the Title was 'What a man of 95 ought to know,' as endorsed by eminent divines, and that. . ." Seeing that she only began to cry, he broke off and continued in a gentler tone: "it 'means,' my dear. . ." He stopped short, for she was taking no notice; but as her figure was bent by sobs into something very like a note of interrogation: "You want to know that it 'is,' {140B} I suppose!" continued the knight, in a superior,

but rather offended voice.

"If you would, please, sir!"

"Well, 'that,'" pronounced the knight, with the air of having thoroughly studied the question and reached a conclusion absolutely final and irreversible, "'that,' Goodness only knows. But I will sing it to you."

PRELIMINARY INVOCATION.

NOTHUNG.<<1>>

<<1. The name of Siegfried's sword.>>

THE crowns of Gods and mortals wither;
Moons fade where constellations shone;
Numberless aeons brought us hither;
Numberless aeons beckon us on.
The world is old, and I am strong --
Awake, awake, O Sword of Song!

Here, in the Dusk of Gods, I linger;
The world awaits a World of Truth.
Kindle, O lyre, beneath my finger!
Evoke the age's awful youth!
To arms against the inveterate wrong!
Awake, awake, O Sword of Song!

Sand-founded reels the House of Faith;
Up screams the howl of ruining sect;
Out from the shrine flits the lost Wraith;
"God hath forsaken His elect!"
Confusion sweeps upon the throng --
Awake, awake, O Sword of Song!

Awake to wound, awake to heal
By wounding, thou resistless sword!
Raise the prone priestcrafts that appeal
In agony to their prostrate Lord!

Raise the duped herd -- they have suffered long!
Awake, awake, O Sword of Song!

My strength this agony of the age
Win through; my music charm the old

Sorrow of years: my warfare wage
By iron to an age of gold: --
The world is old, and I am strong --
Awake, awake, O Sword of Song! {141A}

INTRODUCTION TO "ASCENSION DAY AND PENTECOST."

NOT a word to introduce my introduction! Let me instantly launch the Boat of Discourse on the Sea of Religious Speculation, in danger of the Rocks of Authority and the Quicksands of Private Interpretation, Scylla and Charybdis. Here is the strait; what God shall save us from shipwreck? If we choose to understand the Christian (or any other) religion literally, we are at once overwhelmed by its inherent impossibility. Our credulity is outraged, our moral sense shocked, the holiest foundations of our inmost selves assailed by no ardent warrior in triple steel, but by a loathly and disgusting worm. That this is so, the apologists for the religion in question, whichever it may be, sufficiently indicate (as a rule) by the very method of their apology. The alternative is to take the religion symbolically, esoterically; but to move one step in this direction is to start on a journey whose end cannot be determined. The religion, ceasing to be a tangible thing, an object uniform for all sane eyes, becomes rather that mist whereon the sun of the soul casts up, like Brocken spectre, certain vast and vague images of the beholder himself, with or without a glory encompassing them. The function of the facts is then quite passive: it matters little or nothing whether the cloud be the red mist of Christianity, or the glimmering silver-white of Celtic Paganism; the hard grey dim-gilded of Buddhism, the fleecy opacity of Islam, or the mysterious medium of those ancient faiths which come up in as many colours as their investigator has moods. <<"In order to get over the ethical difficulties presented by the naive naturalism of many parts of those Scriptures, in the divine authority of which he firmly believed, Philo borrowed from the Stoics (who had been in like straits in respect of Greek mythology) that great Excalibur which they had forged with infinite pains and skill -- the method of allegorical interpretation. This mighty 'two-handed engine at the door' of the theologian is warranted to make a speedy end of any and every moral or intellectual difficulty, by showing that, taken allegorically, or, as it is otherwise said, 'poetically' or 'in a spiritual sense,' the plainest words mean whatever a pious interpreter desires they should mean" (Huxley, "Evolution of Theology"). -- A. C.>> {141B} If the student has advanced spiritually so that he can internally, infallibly perceive what is Truth, he will find it equally well symbolised in most external faiths. It is curious that Browning never turns his wonderful faculty of analysis upon the fundamental problems of religion, as it were an axe laid to the root of the Tree of Life. It seems quite clear that he knew what would result if he

did so. We cannot help fancying that he was unwilling to do this. The proof of his knowledge I find in the following lines: --

"I have read much, thought much, experienced much,
Yet would die rather than avow my fear
The Naples' liquefaction may be false . . .
I hear you recommend, I might at least
Eliminate, degrassify my faith
Since I adopt it: keeping what I must
And leaving what I can; such points as this . . .
Still, when you bid me purify the same,
To such a process I discern no end . . .
First cut the liquefaction, what comes last
But Fichte's clever cut at God himself? . . .
I trust nor hand, nor eye, nor heart, nor brain
To stop betimes: they all get drunk alike.
The first step, I am master not to take."

This is surely the apotheosis of wilful ignorance! We may think, perhaps, that Browning is "hedging" when, in the last paragraph, he says: "For Blougram, he believed, say, half he spoke," <> and hints at some deeper ground. It is useless to say, "This is Blougram and not Browning." Browning could hardly have described the dilemma without seeing it. What he really believes is, perhaps, a mystery.

That Browning, however, believes in universal salvation, though he nowhere (so far as I know) gives his reasons, save as they are summarised in the last lines of the below-quoted stanza of "Apparent Failure," and from his final pronouncement of the Pope on Guido, represented in Browning's masterpiece as a Judas without the decency to hang himself.

"So ("ie." by suddenness of fate) may the truth be flashed out by one
blow,
And Guido see one instant and be saved.
Else I avert my face nor follow him
Into that sad obscure sequestered state
Where God unmakes but to remake the soul
He else made first in vain: which must not be." {142A}

This may be purgatory, but it sounds not unlike reincarnation.

It is at least a denial of the doctrine of eternal punishment.
As for myself, I took the first step years ago, quite in ignorance of what the last would lead to. God is indeed cut away -- a cancer from the breast of truth.

Of those philosophers, who from unassailable premisses draw by righteous deduction a conclusion against God, and then for His sake overturn their whole structure by an act of will, like a child breaking an ingenious toy, I take Mansel as my type.<>

Now, however, let us consider the esoteric idea-mongers of Christianity, Swedenborg, Anna Kingsford, Deussen and the like, of whom I have taken Caird as my example. I wish to unmask these people: I perfectly agree with nearly everything they say, but their claim to be Christians is utterly confusing, and lends a lustre to Christianity which is quite foreign. Deussen, for example, coolly discards nearly all the Old Testament, and, picking a few New Testament passages, often out of their context, claims his system as Christianity. Luther discards James. Kingsford calls Paul the Arch Heretic. My friend the "Christian Clergyman" accepted Mark and Acts -- until pushed. Yet Deussen is honest enough to admit that Vedanta teaching is identical, but clearer! and he quite clearly and sensibly defines Faith -- surely the most essential quality for the adherent to Christian dogma -- as "being convinced on insufficient evidence." Similarly the dying-to-live idea of Hegel (and Schopenhauer) claimed by Caird as the central spirit of Christianity is far older, in the Osiris Myth of the Egyptians. These ideas are all right, but they have no more to do with Christianity than the Metric System with the Great Pyramid. But see Piazzì Smyth!<> Henry Morley has even the audacity to claim Shelley -- Shelley! -- as a Christian "in spirit."

Talking of Shelley: -- With regard to my open denial of the personal Christian God, may it not be laid to my charge that I have dared to voice in bald language what Shelley {142B} sang in words of surpassing beauty: for of course the thought in one or two passages of this poem is practically identical with that in certain parts of "Queen Mab" and "Prometheus Unbound." But the very beauty of these poems (especially the latter) is its weakness: it is possible that the mind of the reader, lost in the sensuous, nay! even in the moral beauty of the words, may fail to be impressed by their most important meaning. Shelley himself recognised this later: hence the direct and simple vigour of the "Masque of Anarchy."

It has often puzzled athiests how a man of Milton's genius could have written as he did of Christianity. But we must not forget that Milton lived immediately after the most important Revolution in Religion and Politics of modern times: Shelley on the brink of such another Political upheaval. Shakespeare alone sat enthroned above it all like a god, and is not lost in the mire of controversy.<> This also, though "I'm no Shakespeare, as too probable," I have endeavoured to avoid: yet I cannot but express the hope that my own enquiries into religion may be the reflection of the spirit of the age; and that plunged as we are in the midst of jingoism and religious revival, we may be standing on the edge of some gigantic precipice, over which we may cast all our impedimenta of lies and trickeries, political, social, moral, and religious, and (ourselves) take wings and fly. The comparison

between myself and the masters of English thought I have named is unintentional, though perhaps unavoidable; and though the presumption is, of course, absurd, yet a straw will show which way the wind blows as well as the most beautiful and elaborate vane: and in this sense it is my most eager hope that I may not unjustly draw a comparison between myself and the great reformers of eighty years ago. {143A}

I must apologise (perhaps) for the new note of frivolity in my work: due doubtless to the frivolity of my subject: these poems being written when I was an Advaitist and could not see why -- everything being an illusion -- there should be any particular object in doing or thinking anything. How I have found the answer will be evident from my essay on this subject. <<"Vide infra," "Berashith.">> I must indeed apologise to the illustrious Shade of Robert Browning for my audacious parody in title, style, and matter of his "Christmas Eve and Easter Day." The more I read it the eventual anticlimax of that wonderful poem irritated me only the more. But there is hardly any poet living or dead who so commands alike my personal affection and moral admiration. My desire to find the Truth will be my pardon with him, whose whole life was spent in admiration of Truth, though he never turned its formidable engines against the Citadel of the Almighty. If I be appealed of blasphemy or irreverence in my treatment of these subjects, I will take refuge in Browning's own apology, from the very poem I am attacking:

"I have done: and if any blames me,
Thinking that merely to touch in brevity
The topics I dwell on were unlawful --
Or worse, that I trench with undue levity
On the bounds of the holy and the awful --
I praise the heart and pity the head of him
And refer myself to Thee, instead of him,
Who head and heart alike discernest,
Looking below light speech we utter
Where frothy spume and frequent splutter
Prove that the soul's depths boil in earnest!"

But I have after all little fear that I am seriously wrong. That I show to my critics the open door of the above city of refuge may be taken as merely another gesture of contemptuous pity, the last insult which may lead my antagonists to that surrender which is the truest victory.

{full page follows}

PEACE TO ALL BEINGS.

{143B}

{Column format is abandoned for the next full page sections; resumed after as noted. Marginal notes and line numbers alternate for even and odd pages, left to right/right to left, but these have been kept in even page format in this transcription.}

ASCENSION DAY.

Curious posi- I FLUNG out of chapel{End note#1}<<1>> and church,
tion of poet. Temple and hall and meeting-room,
Venus' Bower and Osiris' Tomb,{#2}
And left the devil in the lurch,
While God{#3} got lost in the crowd of gods,{#4} 5
And soul wend down{#5} in the turbid tide
Of the metaphysical lotus-eyed,{#6}
And I was -- anyhow, what's the odds?

<<1. The numbered notes {end notes only} are given at p. 190.>>

What is Truth? The life to live? The thought to think? Shall I take refuge
said jesting In a tower like once childe Roland<<1>>{#7} found, blind,
Pilate: but deaf, huge, 10

Crowley waits Or in that forest of two hundred thousand
for an answer. Trees,{#8} fit alike to shelter man and mouse, and --
< "Essay on I warrant you'll journey a wiser man ever hence!
Truth," Let's tap (like the negro who gets a good juice of it, 15
line 1.>> Cares nought if that be, or be not, God's right use of
it).{#10}

In all that forest of verses one tree{#11}
Yclept "Red Cotton Nightcap Country":
How a goldsmith, between the Ravishing Virgin
And a leman too rotten to put a purge in, 20
Day by day and hour by hour,

In a Browningsque forest of thoughts having lost himself,
Expecting a miracle, solemnly tossed himself

Off from the top of a tower.

Moral: don't spoil such an excellent sport as an 25

Ample estate with a church and a courtesan!

<<1. "Childe Roland to the dark Tower came." -- BROWNING.>>

Alternative "Truth, that's the gold!"{#12} But don't worry about it!

theories of I, you, or Simpkin(#13} can get on without it!

Greek authors. If life's task be work and love's (the soft lipped) ease,

Browning's Death's be God's glory? discuss with Euripides! {144} 30

summary. Or, cradle be hardship, and finally coffin, ease,

Love being filth? let us ask Aristophanes!

Or, heaven's sun bake us, while Earth's bugs and fleas kill

us,

Love the God's scourge? I refer you to Aeschylus!

(Nay! that's a slip! Say we "Earth's grim device, cool loss!

--" 35

Better the old Greek orthography! -- Aischulos!{#14}

Or, love be God's champagne's foam; death in man's trough,

hock lees,

Pathos our port's beeswing? what answers Sophocles?

Brief, with love's medicine let's draught, bolus, gloubule

us!

Wise and succinct bids, I think, Aristobulus.{#15} 40

Whether my Muse be Euterpe or Clio,

Life, Death, and Love are all Batrachomyo{#16} --

Machia, what? ho! old extinct Alcibiades?

For me, do ut--God true, be mannikin liar! --des!

Apology of It's rather hard, isn't it, sir, to make sense of it? 45

poet. Mine of so many pounds -- pouch even pence of it?{#17}

Skeleton of Try something easier,{#18} where the bard seems to me

poem. Valu- Seeking that light, which I find come in dreams to me.

able fact for Even as he takes two feasts to enlarge upon,

use of lovers. So will I do too to launch my old barge upon. 50

Invocation. Analyse, get hints from Newton{#19} or Faraday,{#20}

Use every weapon -- love, scorn, reason, parody!

Just where he worships? Ah me! shall his soul,

Far in some glory, take hurt from a mole

Grubbing i' th' ground? Shall his spirit not see, 55

Lightning to lightning, the spirit in me?

Parody? Shall not his spirit forgive

Me, who shall love him as long as I live?

Love's at its height in pure love? Nay, but after

When the song's light dissolves gently in laughter! 60
Then and then only the lovers may know
Nothing can part them for ever. And so,
Muse, hover o'er me! Apollo, above her!

Imperfect I, of the Moderns, have let alone Greek. {#21}
scholastic at- Out of the way Intuition shall shove her. 65
tainments of Spirit and Truth in my darkness I seek.
author reme- Little by little they bubble and leak;
died by his Such as I have to the world I discover.
great spiritual Words -- are they weak ones at best? They shall speak!
insight.
His intention. {PAGE 145}

His achieve- Shields? Be they paper, paint, lath? They shall cover 70
ment. Well as them may, the big heart of a lover!
Plan of poem Swords? Let the lightning of Truth strike the fortress
"Conspuez Frowning of God! I will sever one more tress
Dieu!" Off the White Beard {#22} with his son's blood besprinkled,
Carve one more gash in the forehead {#23} hate-wrinkled: -- 75
So, using little arms, earn one day better ones;
Cutting the small chains, {#24} learn soon to unfetter one's
Limbs from the large ones, walk forth and be free! --
So much for Browning! and so much for me!

Apology for Pray do not ask me where I stand! 80
manner of "Who asks, doth err." {#25} At least demand
poem. No folly such as answer means!
A chance for "But if" (you {#26} say) "your spirit weans
Tibet. Itself of milk-and-water pap,
And one religion as another 85
O'erleaps itself and falls on the other; {#27}
You'll tell me why at least, mayhap,
Our Christianity excites
Especially such petty spites
As these you strew throughout your verse." 90
The chance of birth! I choose to curse
(Writing in English {#28}) just the yoke
Of faith that tortures English folk.
I cannot write {#29} a poem yet
To please the people in Tibet; 95
But when I can, Christ shall not lack
Peace, while their Buddha I attack. {#30}

Hopes. Iden- Yet by-and-by I hope to weave
ity of poet. A song of Anti-Christmas Eve
Attention And First- and Second-Beast-er Day. 100
drawn to my There's one<<1>> {#31} who loves me dearly (vrai!)
highly decora- Who yet believes me sprung from Tophet,
tive cover. Either the Beast or the False Prophet;
And by all sorts of monkey tricks
Adds up my name to Six Six Six. 105
Retire, good Gallup!{#32} In such strife her
Superior skill makes "you" a cipher! {PAGE 146}
Ho! I adopt the number. Look
At the quaint wrapper of this book!<<2>>
I will deserve it if I can: 110
It is the number of a Man.{#33}

<<1. Crowley's mother.>>
<<2. It had a design of 666 and Crowley's name in Hebrew (which, like
most names, adds up to that figure) on the reverse.>>

Necessity of So since in England Christ still stands
poem. With iron nails in bloody hands
Not pierced, but grasping! to hoist high
Children on cross of agony, 115
I find him real for English lives.
Up with my pretty pair of fives!{#34}
I fight no ghosts.

Mysticism "v." "But why revile"
literal (You urge me) "in that vicious style 120
interpretation. The very faith whose truths you seem
Former excused. (Elsewhere){#35} to hold, to hymn supreme
In your own soul?" Perhaps you know
How mystic doctrines melt the snow
Of any faith: redeem it to 125
A fountain of reviving dew.
So I with Christ: but few receive.
The Qabalistic Balm,{#36} believe
Nothing -- and choose to know instead.
But, to that terror vague and dread, 130
External worship; all my life --
War to the knife! War to the knife!

Buddha re- No! on the other hand the Buddha

bukes poet. Says: "I'm surprised at you! How could a
Detailed Person accept my law and still 135
scheme of Use hatred, the sole means of ill,
modified poem. In Truth's defence? In praise of light?"
Well! Well! I guess Brer Buddha's right!
I am no brutal Cain{#37} to smash an Abel;
I hear that blasphemy's unfashionable: 140
So in quietest way we'll chat about it;
No need to show teeth, claws of cat about it!
With gentle words -- fiat exordium;
Exeat dolor, inret gaudium! {PAGE 147}
We'll have the ham to logic's sandwich 145
Of indignation: last bread bland, which
After our scorn of God's lust, terror, hate,
Prometheus-fired, we'll butter, perorate
With oiled indifference, laughter's silver:
"Omne hoc verbum valet nil, vir"! 150

Aim of poet. Let me help Babu Chander Grish up!
Indignation of As a posset of Hunyadi{#38}
poet. Poet Clear mind! Was Soudan of the Mahdi
defies his Not cleared by Kitchener? Ah, Tchhup!
uncle. Such nonsense for sound truth you dish up, 155
Were I magician, no mere cadì,
Not Samuel's ghost you'd make me wish up,
Not Saul's (the mighty son of Kish) up,
But Ingersoll's or Bradlaugh's pardie!
By spells and caldron stews that squish up, 160
Or purifying of the Nadi,{#39}
Till Stradivarius or Amati
Shriek in my stomach! Sarasate,
Such strains! Such music as once Sadi
Made Persia ring with! I who fish up 165
No such from soul may yet cry: Vade
Retro, Satanas! Tom Bond Bishop!{#40}

Whip and You old screw, Pegasus! Gee (Swish!) up!
spur. Sport- (To any who correctly rhymes{#41}
ing offer. The With Bishop more than seven times 170
"Times" Com- I hereby offer as emolum-
petition out- Ent, a bound copy of this volume.)
done.

Sub-species of These strictures must include the liar

genus Chris- Copleston, {#42} Reverend F. B. Meyer
tian included (The cock of the Dissenter's midden, he!) 175
in poet's And others of the self-same kidney: --
strictures. How different from Sir Philip Sidney!
But "cave os, et claude id, ne
Vituperasse inventus sim."
In English let me render him! 180
'Ware mug, and snap potato-trap!
Or elselv it may haply hap {PAGE 148}
Panel<<1>> in libel I bewail me!
(Funny how English seems to fail me!)
So, as a surgeon to a man, sir, 185
Let me excise your Christian cancer
Impersonally, without vanity,
Just in pure love of poor humanity!

<<1. Scots legal term for defendant.>>

Ascension Day. Here's just the chance you'd have! Behold
Moral aspect The warm sun tint with early gold 190
of Christianity Yon spire: to-day's event provide
to be discussed My text of wrath -- Ascension-tide!
to prejudice of Oh! 'tis a worthy day to wrest
the metaphysi- Hate's diadem from Jesus' Crest!
cal. Ascends he? 'Tis the very test 195
By which we men may fairly judge,
From the rough roads we mortals trudge
Or God's paths paved with heliotrope,
The morals of the crucified.
(Both standpoints join in one, I hope, 200
In metaphysic's stereoscope!)
But for the moment be denied
A metaphysical inspection --
Bring out the antiseptic soap! --
We'll judge the Christ by simple section, 205
And strictly on the moral side.

Orthodoxy to But first; I must insist on taking
be our doxy.<<1>>The ordinary substantial creed
Gipsies barred. Your clergy preach from desk and pulpit
Henrik Ibsen Each Sunday; all the bible, shaking 210
and H. G. Its boards with laughter, as you read

Wells Each Sunday. Ibsen{#43} to a full pit
May play in the moon. If (lunars they)

They thought themselves to be the play,
It's little the applause he'd get. 215

<<1. A Romany word for woman. {WEH NOTE: No, it isn't. "Doxy" is from Dutch, for "Doll", hence a darling. "Orthodoxy is my Doxy" is such a cliché that it's used as an example in a dictionary of word origins!}>>

Parson and I met a Christian Clergyman,<<1>>
poet. Fugitive The nicest man I ever met.
nature of We argued of the Cosmic plan.
dogma in these I was Lord Roberts, he de Wet.{#44} {PAGE 149}
latter days. He tells me when I cite the "Fall" 220
The Higher "But those are legends, after all."
Criticism.{149m} He has a hundred hills{#45} to lie in,
But finds no final ditch{#46} to die in.
"Samuel was man; the Holy Spook
Did not dictate the Pentateuch." 225
With cunning feint he lures me on
To loose my pompoms on Saint John;
And, that hill being shelled, doth swear
His forces never had been there.
I got disgusted, called a parley, 230
(Here comes a white-flag treachery!)
Asked: "Is there anything you value,
Will hold to?" He laughed, "Chase me, Charlie!"
But seeing in his mind that I
Would not be so converted, "Shall you," 235
He added, "grope in utter dark?
The Book of Acts and that of Mark
Are now considered genuine."
I snatch a Testament, begin
Reading at random the first page; -- 240
He stops me with a gesture sage:
"You must not think, because I say
St Mark is genuine, I would lay
Such stress unjust upon its text,
As base thereon opinion. Next?" 245
I gave it up. He escaped. Ah me!
But so did Christianity.

<<1. The Rev. J. Bowley. The conversation described actually occurred in

Mr. Gerald Kelly's studio in Paris.>>

Lord George As for a quiet talk on physics sane ac

Sanger<<1>> on Lente, I hear the British Don
the Unknowable. Spout sentiments more bovine than a sane yak 250
How the crea- Ever would ruminare upon,
tures talk. Half Sabbatarian and half Khakimaniac,
Built up from Paul and John,
With not a little tincture of Leviticus
Gabbled pro forma, jaldi,<<2>> a la Psittacus 255
To aid the appalling hotch-potch; lyre and lute
Replace by liar and loot, the harp and flute {PAGE 150}
Are dumb, the drum doth come and make us mute:
The Englishman, half huckster and half brute,
Raves through his silk hat of the Absolute. 260
The British Don, half pedant and half hermit,
Begins: "The Ding an sich <<3>> -- as Germans term it --"
We stop him short; he readjusts his glasses,
Turns to his folio -- 'twill eclipse all precedent,
Reveal God's nature, every dent a blessed dent! 265
The Donkey: written by an ass, for asses.

<<1. Proprietor of a circus and menagerie.>>

<<2. Hindustani: quickly.>>

<<3. "Vide infra," Science and Buddhism, and the writings of Immanuel
Kant and his successors.>>

Basis of Poem So, with permission, let us be
to be that of Orthodox to our finger-ends;
the Compro- What the bulk hold, High Church or Friends,
mise of 1870. Or hard-shell Baptists -- and we'll see. 270

Non-medical I will not now invite attack
nature of poem. By proving white a shade of black,
Crowley J. Or Christ (as some{#47} have lately tried)
An epileptic maniac,
Citing some cases, "where a dose 275
Of Bromide duly given in time
Drags a distemper so morose
At last to visions less sublime;
Soft breezes stir the lyre Aeolian,
No more the equinoctial gales; 280
The patient reefs his mental sails;

His Panic din that shocked the Timolian{#48}
Admits a softer run of scales --
Seems no more God, but mere Napoleon
Or possibly the Prince of Wales": -- 285

Concluding such a half-cured case
With the remark "where Bromide fails! --
But Bromide people did not know
Those 1900 years ago."
I think we may concede to Crowley an 290
Impartial attitude.

No mention And so
will be made I scorn the thousand subtle points
of the Figs and Wherein a man might find a fulcrum
the Pigs. {151m} (Ex utero Matris ad sepulcrum, 295 {PAGE 151}
Et praeter -- such as Huxley tells
I'll pierce your rotten harness-joints,
Dissolve your diabolic spells,
With the quick truth and nothing else.

Christian pre- So not one word derogatory 300
misses ac- To your own version of the story!
cepted. Severe I take your Christ, your God's creation,
mental strain Just at their own sweet valuation.
involved in For by this culminating scene,
reading poem. Close of that wondrous life of woe 305
Before and after death, we know
How to esteem the Nazarene.
Where's the wet towel?

The Ascension Let us first
at last! This From Paul right downward to the Schools, 310
is a common That the Ascension's self rehearsed
feat. Prana- Christ's Godhead by its miracle.
yama. Grand! -- but the power is mine as well!
In India levitation counts 315
No tithe of the immense amounts
Of powers demanded by the wise
From Chela ere the Chela rise
To Knowledge. Fairy-tales? Well, first,
Sit down a week and hold your breath 320
As masters teach{#49} -- until you burst,
Or nearly -- in a week, one saith,

A month, perchance a year for you,
Hard practice, and yourself may fly --
Yes! I have done it! you may too! 325

Difference be- Thus, in Ascension, you and I

tween David Stand as Christ's peers and therefore fit
Douglas To judge him -- "Stay, friend, wait a bit!"
Home, Sri (You cry) "Your Indian Yogis fall
Swami Back to the planet after all, 330
Sabapati Never attain to heaven and stand
Vamadeva (Stephen) or sit (Paul){#50} at the hand
Bhaskara- Of the most High! -- And that alone,
nanda Saras- That question of the Great White Throne,
wati and the Is the sole point that we debate." 335
Christ. I answer, Here in India wait {PAGE 152}
Latter com- Samadhi-Dak,{#51} convenient
pared to To travel to Maha Meru, {#52}
Madame Hum- Or Gaurisankar's{#53} keen white wedge
bert. {152m} Spearing the splendid dome of blue, 340
Former com- Or Chogo's{#54} mighty flying edge
pared to Keru- Shearing across the firmament, --
bim; as it is But, first, to that exact event
written, Run- You Christians celebrate to-day.
ning and Re- We stand where the disciples stood 345
turning. And see the Master float away
Into that cloudlet heavenly-hued
Receiving him from mortal sight.
Which of his sayings prove the true,
Lightning-bescrawled athwart the blue? 350
I say not, Which in hearts aright
Are treasured? but, What after ages
Engrave on history's iron pages?
This is the one word of "Our lord";
"I bring not peace; I bring a sword." 355
In this the history of the West{#55}
Bears him out well. How stands the test?
One-third a century's life of pain --
He lives, he dies, he lives again,
And rises to eternal rest 360
Of bliss with Saints -- an endless reign!
Leaving the world to centuries torn
By every agony and scorn,
And every wickedness and shame

Taking their refuge in his Name. 365
Shri Para- "No Yogi shot his Chandra"#{#56} "so."
nanda ap- Will Christ return? What ho? What ho!
plauds Yogi. What? What? "He mediates above
Gerald jeers at Still with His sire for mercy, love, --"
Jesus. And other trifles! Far enough 370

That Father's purpose from such stuff!

John iii. 16.<<1>>You see, when I was young, they said:
Its importance. "Whate'er you ponder in your head,
Its implied Or make the rest of Scripture mean,
meaning. You can't evade John iii. 16." 375 {PAGE 153}
Exactly! Grown my mental stature,
I ponder much: but never yet
Can I get over or forget
That bitter text's accused nature,
The subtle devilish omission,#{#57} 380
The cruel antithesis implied,
The irony, the curse-fruition,
The calm assumption of Hell's fevers
As fit, as just, for unbelievers --
These are the things that stick beside 385
And hamper my quite serious wish
To harbor kind thoughts of the "Fish."#{#58}

<<1. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that
whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.">>

My own vague Here goes my arrow to the gold!
optimism. Im- I'll make no magpies! Though I hold
possibility of Your Christianity a lie, 390
tracing cause Abortion and iniquity,
back or effect The most immoral and absurd
forward to the -- (A priest's invention, in a word) --
ultimate. Of all religions, I have hope
Ethics In the good Dhamma's#{#59} wider scope, 395
individual. Nay, certainty! that all at last,
However came they in the past,
Move up or down -- who knows, my friend? --
But yet with no uncertain trend
Unto Nibbana in the end. 400
I do not even dare despise
Your doctrines, prayers, and ceremonies!

Far from the word "you'll go to hell!"
I dare not say "you do not well!"
I must obey my own mind's laws, 405
Accept its limits, seek its cause:
My meat may be your poison! I
Hope to convert you by-and-by?
Never! I cannot trace the chain{#60}

That brought us here, shall part again 410
Our lives -- perchance for aye! I bring
My hand down on this table-thing,{#61}
And that commotion widens thus
And shakes the nerves of Sirius!
To calculate one hour's result 415
I find surpassing difficult; {PAGE 154}
One year's effect, one moment's cause;
What mind would estimate such laws?
Who then (much more!) may act aright,
Judged by and in ten centuries' sight? 420
(Yet I believe, whate'er we do
Is best for me and best for you
And best for all: I line no brow
With wrinkles, meditating how.)

Caird's inter- Well, but another way remains. 425
pretation of Shall we expound the cosmic plan
Hegel. His By symbolising God and man
identification And nature thus? As man contains
of it with Cells, nerves, grey matter in his brains,
Christianity Each cell a life, self-centre, free 430
proved to be Yet self-subordinate to the whole
mystical. His For its own sake -- expand! -- so we
interpretation Molecules of a central soul,
false. Time's sons, judged by Eternity.
Nature is gone -- our joys, our pains, 435
Our little lives -- and God remains
Were this the truth -- why! worship then
Were not so imbecile for men!
But that's no Christian faith! For where
Enters the dogma of despair? 440
Despite his logic's sliver flow
I must count Caird{#62} a mystic! No!
You Christians shall not mask me so
The plain words of your sacred books

Behind friend Swedenbrog his spooks! 445
Says Huxley{#63} in his works (q.v.)
"The microcosmic lives change daily
In state or body" -- yet you gaily
Arm a false Hegel cap-a-pie--
Your self, his weapons -- make him wear 450
False favours of a ladye fayre,
(The scarlet woman!) bray and blare

A false note on the trumpet, shout:
"A champion? Faith's defender! Out!
Sceptic and sinner! See me! Quail I?" 455
I cite the Little-go. You stare,
And have no further use for Paley! {PAGE 155}

Mysticism does But if you drink your mystic fill
not need Christ. Under the good tree Igdrasil{#64}
Krishna will Where is at all your use for Christ? 460
serve, or the Hath Krishna not at all sufficed?
Carpenter. I hereby guarantee to pull
The Sacred A faith as quaint and beautiful
Walrus. As much attractive to an ass,
God, some And setting reason at defiance, 465
Vestments, and As Zionism, Christian Science,
Lady Wimborne. Or Ladies' League,{#65} "Keep of the Grass!"
From "Alice through the Looking-Glass."

Fearful aspect Hence I account no promise worse,
of John iii. 16. Fail to conceive a fiercer curse 470
Than John's third chapter (sixteenth verse).

Universalism. But now (you say) broad-minded folk
Will God get Think that those words the Master spoke
the bara<<1>> Should save all men at last. But mind!
slam? The text says nothing of the kind! 475
Read the next verses!<<2>>

<<1. Great slam -- at term of Bridge-Whist. Bara is Hindustani for great.>>
<<2. John iii. 18, "He that believeth not is condemned already.">>

Eternal life. Then -- one-third
Divergent Of all humanity are steady
views of its In a belief in Buddha's word,
desirability. Possess eternal life already, 480

Buddhist idea. And shun delights, laborious days
Of labour living (Milton's phrase)
In strenuous purpose to -- ? to cease!
"A fig for God's eternal peace!
True peace is to annihilate 485
The chain of causes men call Fate,
So that no Sattva{#66} may renew
Once death has run life's shuttle through."
(Their sages put it somewhat thus)

What's fun to them is death to us! 490
That's clear at least.

Dogma of But never mind!
Belief. Call them idolaters and blind!
We'll talk of Christ. As Shelley sang,
"Shall an eternal issue hang 495 {PAGE 156}
On just belief or unbelief;
And an involuntary act
Make difference infinite in fact
Between the right and left-hand thief?
Belief is not an act of will!" 500

Free will. I think, Sir, that I have you still,
Herbert Even allowing (much indeed!)
Spencer. That any will at all is freed,
And is not merely the result
Of sex, environment, and cult, 505
Habit and climate, health and mind,
And twenty thousand other things!
So many a metaphysic sings.
(I wish they did indeed: I find
Their prose the hardest of hard reading!) 510

If there is free "But if," you cry, "the world's designed
will how can As a mere mirage in the mind,
there be pain Up jumps free will." But all I'm pleading
or damnation? Is against pain and hell. Freewill 515
not-Self being Then can damn man? No fearful mill,
an illusion. Grinding catastrophe, is speeding
Self or not-Self Outside -- some whence, some wither? And{#67}
real? Chute I think we easier understand
d'Icare. Where Schelling (to the Buddha leading)
Calls real not-self. In any case 520

There is not, there can never be
A soul, or sword or armour needing,
Incapable in time or space
Or to inflict or suffer. We
I think are gradually weeding 525
The soil of dualism. Pheugh!
Drop to the common Christian's view!

I have pity: This is my point; the world lies bleeding: --
had Christ (Result of sin?) -- I do not care; 530

any? The I will admit you anywhere!
Sheep and the I take your premisses themselves
Goats. And, like the droll spiteful elves
They are, they yet outwit your plan.
I will prove Christ a wicked man {PAGE 157}
(Granting him Godhead) merciless 535
To all the anguish and distress
About him -- save to him it clung
And prayed. Give me omnipotence?
I am no fool that I should fence
That power, demanding every tongue 540
To call me god -- I would exert
That power to heal creation's hurt;
Not to divide my devotees
From those who scorned me to the close:
A worm, a fire, a thirst for these; 545
A harp-resounding heaven for those!

Will Satan be And though you claim Salvation sure
saved? Who For all the heathen{#68} -- there again
pardons Judas? New Christians give the lie to plain
Scripture, those words which must endure! 550
(The Vedas say the same!) and though
His mercy widens ever so,
I never met a man (this shocks,
What I now press) so heterodox,
Anglican, Roman, Methodist, 555
Peculiar Person -- all the list! --
I never met a man who called
Himself a Christian, but appalled
Shrank when I dared suggest the hope
God's mercy could expand its scope, 560
Extend, or bend, or spread, or straighten

So far as to encompass Satan
Or even poor Iscariot.

God's fore- Yet God created (did he not?)
knowledge of Both these. Omnisciently, we know! 565
Satan's fall and Benevolently? Even so!
eternal misery Created from Himself distinct
makes him re- (Note that! -- it is not meet for you
sponsible for To plead me Schelling and his crew)
it. If he and These souls, foreknowing how were linked 570
Judas are The chains in either's Destiny.

finally re- "You pose me the eternal Why?"
deemed, we Not I? Again, "Who asks doth err."
might perhaps But this one thing I say. Perchance
look over the There lies a purpose in advance 575 {PAGE 158}
matter this Tending to final bliss -- to stir
once. Poet Some life to better life, this pain
books his seat. Is needful: that I grant again.
Creator in{158m} Did they at last in glory live,
heaven suffers Satan and Judas {#69} might forgive 580
Hell's pangs, The middle time of misery,
owing to re- Forgive the wrong creation first
proaches of Or evolution's iron key
bard. Did them -- provided they are passed
Beyond all change and pain at last 585
Out of this universe accurst.
But otherwise! I lift my voice,
Deliberately take my choice
Promethean, eager to rejoice,
In the grim protest's joy to revel 590
Betwixt Iscariot and the Devil,
Throned in their midst! No pain to feel,
Tossed on some burning bed of steel,
But theirs: My soul of love should swell
And, on those piteous floors they trod, 595
Feel, and make God feel, out of Hell,
Across the gulf impassable,
That He was damned and I was God!

Ethical and Ay! Let him rise and answer me
eloquent de- That false creative Deity, 600
nunciation of Whence came his right to rack the Earth
Christian Cos- With pangs of death,{#70} disease, and birth:

mogony. No joy unmarred by pain and grief:
Insult on injury heaped high
In that quack-doctor infamy 605
The Panacea of -- Belief!
Only the selfish soul of man
Could ever have conceived a plan
Man only of all life to embrace,
One planet of all stars to place 610
Alone before the Father's face;
Forgetful of creation's stain,
Forgetful of creation's pain,
Not dumb! -- forgetful of the pangs

Whereby each life laments and hangs, 615
(Now as I speak a lizard{#71} lies
In wait for light-bewildered flies) {PAGE 159}
Each life bound ever to the wheel{#72}
Ay, and each being -- we may guess
Now that the very crystals feel! -- 620
For them no harp-resounding court,
No palm, no crown, but none the less
A cross, be sure! The worst man's thought
In hell itself, bereft of bliss,
Were less unmerciful than this! 625
No! for material things, I hear,
Will burn away, and cease to be --
(Nibbana! Ah! Thou shoreless Sea!)
Man, man alone, is doomed to fear,
To suffer the eternal woe, 630
Or else, to meet man's subtle foe,
God -- and oh! infamy of terror!
Be like him -- like him! And for ever!
At least I make not such an error:
My soul must utterly dissever 635
Its very silliest thought, belief,
From such a God as possible,
Its vilest from his worship. Never!
Avaunt, abominable chief
Of Hate's grim legions; let me well 640
Gird up my loins and make endeavour,
And seek a refuge from my grief,
O never in Heaven -- but in Hell!

Death-bed of "Oh, very well!" I think you say,

poet. Effect "Wait only till your dying day! 645
of body on See whether then you kiss the rod,
mind. And bow that proud soul down to God!"
I perfectly admit the fact;
Quite likely that I so shall act!
Here's why Creation jumps at prayer. 650
You Christians quote me in a breath
This, that, the other atheist's death; {#73}
How they sought God! Of course! Impair
By just a touch of fever, chill,
My health -- where flies my vivid will? 655
My carcass with quinine is crammed;
I wish South India were damned;

I wish I had my mother's nursing,
Find precious little use in cursing, {PAGE 160}
And slide to leaning on another, 660
God, or the doctor, or my mother.
But dare you quote my fevered word
For better than my health averred?
The brainish fancies of a man
Hovering on delirium's brink:
"Shall these be classed his utmost span?" 666<<1>>
All that he can or ought to think?
No! the strong man and self-reliant
Is the true spiritual giant.
I blame no weaklings, but decline 670
To take their maunderings for mine.

<<1. WEH NOTE: This line deliberately numbered thus in the original.>>

Poem does not You see I do not base my thesis
treat of Palae- On your Book's being torn to pieces
ontology: nor By knowledge; nor invoke the shade
of poet's youth: Of my own boyhood's agony. 675
nor of Christian Soul, shudder not! Advance the blade
infamies. Poet Of fearless fact and probe the scar!
forced to mystic You know my first-class memory?
position. Well, in my life two years there are
Twelve years back -- not so very far! 680
Two years whereof no memory stays.
One ageless anguish filled my days
So that no item, like a star
Sole in the supreme night, above

Stands up for hope, or joy, or love. 685
Nay, not one ignis fatuus glides
Sole in that marsh, one agony
To make the rest look light. Abides
The thick sepulchral changeless shape
Shapeless, continuous misery 690
Whereof no smoke-wreaths might escape
To show me whither lay the end,
Whence the beginning. All is black,
Void of all cause, all aim; unkenned,
As if I had been dead indeed -- 695
All in Christ's name! And I look back,
And then and long time after lack
Courage or strength to hurl the creed

Down to the heaven it sprang from! No!
Not this inspires the indignant blow 700 {PAGE 161}
At the whole fabric -- nor the seas
Filled with those innocent agonies
Of Pagan Martyrs that once bled,
Of Christian Martyrs damned and dead
In inter-Christian bickerings, 705
Where hate exults and torture springs,
A lion on anguished flesh and blood,
A vulture on ill-omen wings,
A cannibal{#74} on human food.
Nor do I cry the scoffer's cry, 710
That Christians live and look the lie
Their faith has taught them: none of these
Inspire my life, disturb my peace.
I go beneath the outward faith
Find it a devil or a wrath, 715
Just as my mood or temper tends!

Mystical mean- And thus to-day that "Christ ascends,"
ing of "Ascen- I take the symbol, leave the fact,
sion Day." Decline to make the smallest pact
Futility of With your creative Deity, 720
whole discuss- And say: The Christhood-soul in me,
sion, in view of Risen of late, is now quite clear
facts. Even of the smallest taint of Earth.
Supplanting God, the Man has birth
("New Birth" you'll call the same, I fear,) 725
Transcends the ordinary sphere

And flies in the direction. "x."
(There lies the fourth dimension.) Vex
My soul no more with mistranslations
From Genesis to Revelations, 730
But leave me with the Flaming Star,{#75}
Jeheshua (See thou Zohar!)(#76)
And thus our formidable Pigeon-#{#77}
Lamb-and-Old-Gentleman religion
Fizzles in smoke, and I am found 735
Attacking nothing. Here's the ground,
Pistols, and coffee -- three in one,
(Alas, O Rabbi Schimeon!)
But never a duellist -- no Son,
No Father, and (to please us most) 740
Decency pleads -- no Holy Ghost!

All vanish at the touch of truth,
A cobweb trio -- like, in sooth, {PAGE 162}
That worthy Yankee millionaire,
And Wealthy nephews, young and fair, 745
The pleasing Crawfords! Lost! Lost! Lost!{#78}
"The Holy Spirit, friend! beware!"

The reader Ah! ten days yet to Pentecost!
may hope. Come that, I promise you -- but stay!
At present 'tis Ascension Day! 750

Summary. At least your faith should be content.
Reader dis- I quarrel not with this event.
missed to The supernatural element?
chapel I deny nothing -- at the term
It is just Nothing I affirm. 755
The fool (with whom is wisdom, deem
The Scriptures -- rightly!) in his heart
Saith (silent, to himself, apart)
This secret: "HB:Aleph-Yod-Nun-final
Aleph-Lamed-Heh-Yod-Memfinal"#{#79}
See the good Psalm! And thus, my friend! 760
My diatribes approach the end
And find us hardly quarrelling.
And yet -- you seem not satisfied?
The literal mistranslated thing
Must not by sinners be denied. 765
Go to you Chapel then to pray!

(I promise Mr. Chesterton{#80}
Before the Muse and I have done
A grand ap-pre-ci-a-ti-on
Of Brixton on Ascension Day.) 770

Future plans of He's gone -- his belly filled enough!
poet. Jesus This Robert-Browning-manque stuff!
dismissed with 'Twill serve -- Mercutio's scratch! -- to show
a jest. Where God and I are disagreed.
There! I have let my feelings go 775
This once. Again? I deem not so.
Once for my fellow-creature's need!
The rest of life, for self-control,{#81}
For liberation of the soul!{#82}
This once, the truth! In future, best 780
Dismissing Jesus with a jest.

The Jest. Ah! Christ ascends?{#83} Ascension day?
Old wonders bear the bell{#84} away?
Santos-Dumont, though! Who can say? {PAGE 163}

PENTECOST

Poem dissimi- TO-DAY thrice halves the lunar week
lar to its pre- Since you, indignant, heard me speak
decessor. Will Indignant. Then I seemed to be
it lead some- So far from Christianity!
where this Now, other celebrations fit
time? The time, another song shall flit 5
Reflections on Reponsive to another tune.
the weather, September's shadow falls on June,
proper to be- But dull November's darkest day
ginning a con- Is lighted by the sun of May. 10
versation in
English.

Autobiography Here's how I got a better learning.
of bard. It's a long lane that has no turning!
Lehrjahre. Mad as a woman-hunted Urning,
Wanderjahre. The lie-chased aletheophilist: <<1>>
"The magician Sorcery's maw gulps the beginner: 15
of Paris." In Pains's mill neophytes are grist:
Disciples ache upon the rack.
Five Years I sought: I miss and lack;
Agony hounds lagoon twist;
I peak and struggle and grow thinner. 20
And get to hate the sight of dinner.
With sacred thirst, I, soul-hydroptic,{#1}
Read Levi{#2} and the cryptic Coptic;{#3}
With ANET' HER-K UAA EN RA,{#4}
"How clever I And HB:Samekh-Peh-Resh-Aleph
am!" Dalet-Tzaddi-Nun-Yod-Ayin-Vau-Taw-Aleph 25
While good MacGregor{#5} (who taught freely us)

Bade us investigate Cornelius
Agrippa and the sorceries black
Of grim Honorius and Abramelin;{#6}
While, fertile as the teeming spawn 30
Of pickled lax or stickleback,
Came ancient rituals,{#7} whack! whack!
Of Rosy Cross and Golden Dawn.{#8} {PAGE 164}
I lived, Elijah-like, Mt. Carmel in:
All gave me nothing. I slid back 35
To common sense, as reason bids,
And "hence," my friend, "the Pyramids."

<<1. Truth-lover.>>

My Mahatma. At last I met a maniac
What price With mild eyes full of love, and tresses
Kut Humi? Blanched in those lonely wildernesses 40
Where he found wisdom, and long hands
Gentle, pale olive 'gainst the sand's
Amber and gold. At sight, I knew him;
Swifter than light I flashed, ran to him,
And at his holy feet prostrated 45
My head; then, all my being sated
With love, cried "Master! I must know.
Already I can love." E'en so.
"?????? Oh, The sage saluted me {...}{#9}

how wise {...{WEH NOTE: several lines of Devanagari type}...} 50
Grampa must {...}
have been, {...}
Bobbie!" {...}
{...}
{...} said I: 55
"I'm game to work through all eternity,
Your holiness the Guru Swami!"<<1>> Thus
I studied with him till he told me {...{Devanagari}}{#10}
He taught the A B C of Yoga:
I asked {...{Devanagari}}{#11}{...}{#12} 60
In strange and painful attitude,{#13}
I sat, while he was very rude.{#14}
With eyes well fixed on my proboscis,{#15}
I soon absorbed the Yogi Gnosis.
He taught me to steer clear of vices, 65
The giddy waltz, the tuneful aria,
Those fatal foes of Brahma-charya;{#16}

And said, "How very mild and nice is
One's luck to lop out truth in slices,
And chance to chop up cosmic crises!" 70 {PAGE 165}
He taught me A, he taught me B,
He stopped my baccy{#17} and my tea.
He taught me Y, he taught me Z,
He made strange noises in my head.
He taught me that, he taught me this, 75
He spoke of knowledge, life, and bliss.
He taught me this, he taught me that,
He grew me mangoes in his hat.{#18}
I brought him corn: he made good grist of it: --
And here, my Christian friend, 's the gist of it! 80

<<1. The correct form of address from a pupil to his teacher. See Sabhapaty Swami's pamphlet on Yoga.>>

The philo- First, here's philosophy's despair,
sophical im- The cynic scorn of self. I think
passe. Practi- At times the search is worth no worry,
cal advice. And hasten earthward in a hurry,
Advice to poet's Close spirit's eyes, or bid them blink, 85
fat friend. Go back to Swinburne's{#19} counsel rare,
Kissing the universe its rod,
As thus he sings "For this is God;

Be man with might, at any rate,
In strength of spirit growing straight 90
And life as light a-living out!"
So Swinburne doth sublimely state,
And he is right beyond a doubt.
So, I'm a poet or a rhymer;
A mountaineer or mountain climber. 95
So much for Crowley's vital primer.
The inward life of soul and heart,
That is a thing occult, apart:
But yet his metier or his kismet
As much as these you have of his met. 100
So -- you be butcher; you be baker;
You, Plymouth Brother, and you, Quaker;
You, Mountebank, you, corset-maker: --
While for you, my big beauty, {#20} (Chicago packs pork)
I'll teach you the trick to be hen-of-the-walk. 105
Shriek a music-hall song with a double ong-tong!
Dance a sprightly can-can at Paree or Bolong!

Or the dance of Aleiers -- try your stomach at that!
It's quite in your line, and would bring down your fat.
You've a very fine voice -- could you only control it! 110
And an emerald ring -- and I know where you stole it!
But for goodness sake give up attempting Brunnhilde;
Try a boarding-house cook, or a coster's Matilda! {PAGE 166}
Still you're young yet, scarce forty -- we'll hope at three
score
You'll be more of a singer, and less of a whore. 115

Live out thy Each to his trade! live our our life!
life! Charac- Fondle your child, and buss your wife!
ter of Balti. Trust not, fear not, steer straight and strong!
His religious Don't worry, but just get along.
sincerity. Re- I used to envy all my Balti coolies {#21} 120
lations of poet In an inverse kind of religious hysteria,
and the Egyp- Though every one a perfect fool is,
tian God of To judge by philosophic criteria,
Wisdom. My Lord Archbishop. The name of Winchester,
Crowley dis- Harrow, or Eton {#22} makes them not two inches stir. 125
missed with a They know not Trinity, Merton, or Christchurch;
jest. They worship, but not at your back-pews-high-priced Church.
I've seen them at twenty thousand feet
On the ice, in a snow-storm, at night fall, repeat

Their prayers{#23} -- will you Grace do as much for your
Three 130

As they do for their One? I have seen -- may you see!

They sleep and know not what a mat is;

Seem to enjoy their cold chapaties;<<1>>

Are healthy, strong -- and some are old.

They do not care a damn{#24} for cold, 135

Behave-like children, trust in Allah;

(Flies in Mohammed's spider-parlour!)

They may not think: at least they dare

Live out their lives, and little care

Worries their souls -- worse fools they seem 140

Than even Christians. Do I dream?

Probing philosophy to marrow,

What thought darts in its poisoned arrow

But this? (my wisdom, even to me,

Seems folly) may their folly be 145

True Wisdom? O esteemed Tahuti!{#25}

You are, you are, you are a beauty!

If after all these years of worship

You hail Ra{#26} his bark or Nuit{#27} her ship {PAGE 167}

And sail -- "the waters wild a-wenting 150

Over your child! The left lamenting"

(Campbell).{#28} The Ibis head,{#29} unsuited

To grin, perhaps, yet does its best

To show its strong appreciation

Of the humour of the situation -- 155

In short, dismiss me, jeered and hooted,

Who thought I sported Roland's crest,{#30}

With wisdom saddled, spurred, and booted,

(As I my Jesus) with a jest.{#31}

<<1. A flat cake of unleavened bread. As a matter of fact they do not enjoy
and indeed will not eat them, preferring "dok," a paste of coarse flour and
water, wrapped round a hot stone. It cooks gradually, and remains warm all
day.>>

Slowness of So here is my tribute -- a jolly good strong 'un -- 160

Divine Justice. To the eunuch, the faddist, the fool, and the wrong 'un!

Poet pockets it's fun when you say "A mysterious way{#32}

Piety Stakes. God moves in to fix up his Maskelyne tricks.

National An- He trots on the tides, on the tempest he rides

them of Natal. (Like Cosmo); and as for his pace, we bethought us 165

Achilles could never catch up with that tortoise!"
 No flyer, but very "Who's Griffiths?"<<1>> No jackpot!
 I straddle the blind, age! At hymns I'm a moral;
 In Sankey, your kettle may call me a black pot.
 Here's diamond for coke, and pink pearl for pale coral. 170
 Though his mills may grind slowly -- what says the old
 hymn?{#33}
 Tune, Limerick! Author? My memory's dim.
 The corn said "You sluggard!"
 The mill "You may tug hard," (or lug hard, or plug hard;
 I forget the exact Rhyme; that's a fact) 175
 "If I want to grind slowly I shall,"
 A quainter old fable one rarely is able
 To drag from its haunt in the -- smoke room or stable!
 You see (vide supra) I've brought to the test a ton
 Of tolerance, broadness. Approve me, friend Chesterton! 180

<<1. "Who's Griffiths? The safe man." A well-known advertisement, hence
 "Who's Griffiths" = safe.>>

But this talk is So much when philosophy's lacteal river

all indigestion. Turns sour through a trifle of bile on the liver.
 Now for But now for the sane and the succulent milk
 heath. Of truth -- may it slip down as smoothly as silk!

Reasons for "How very hard it is to be"{#34} 185
 undertaking A Yogi! Let our spirits see
 the task. At least what primal need of thought
 This end to its career has brought: {PAGE 168}
 Why, in a word, I seek to gain
 A different knowledge. Why retain 190
 The husk of flesh, yet seek to merit
 The influx of the Holy Spirit?
 And, swift as caddies pat and cap a tee,
 Gain the great prize all mortals snap at, he-
 Roic guerdon of Srotapatti?{#35} 195

Our logical With calm and philosophic mind,
 method. Clas- No fears, no hopes, devotions blind
 sical allusion. To hamper, soberly we'll state
 demonstrating The problem, and investigate
 erudition of In purely scientific mood 200
 poet. The sheer Ananke of the mind,

A temper for our steel to find
Whereby those brazen nails subdued
Against our door-posts may in vain
Ring. We'll examine, to be plain, 205
By logic's intellectual prism
The spiritual Syllogism.

Whether or We know what fools (only) call
not spirit and Divine and Supernatural
matter are dis- And what they name material 210
tinct, let us Are really one, not two, the line
investigate the By which divide they and define
fundamental Being a shadowy sort of test;
necessities of A verbal lusus at the best,
thought. At worst a wicked lie devised 215
To bind men's thoughts; but we must work
With our own instruments, nor shirk
Discarding what we erstwhile prized;
Should we perceive it disagree
With the first-born necessity. 220

Impermanence I come to tell you why I shun

of the soul. The sight of men, the life and fun
You know I can enjoy so well,
The Nature that I love as none
(I think) before me ever loved. 225
You know I scorn the fear of Hell,
By worship and all else unmoved. {PAGE 169}
You know for me the soul is nought{#36}
Save a mere phantom in the thought,
That thought itself impermanent, 230
Save as a casual element
With such another may combine
To form now water and now wine;
The element itself may be
Changeless to all eternity, 235
But compounds ever fluctuate
With time or space or various state.
(Ask chemists else!) So I must claim
Spirit and matter are the same{#37}
Or else the prey of putrefaction. 240
This matters to the present action
Little or nothing. Here's your theories!

Think if you like: I find it wearies!

Recapitulation It matters little whether we
of principal With Fichte and the Brahmins preach 245
cosmic theories. That Ego-Atman sole must be;
With Schelling and the Buddha own
Non-Ego-Skandhas are alone;
With Hegel and -- the Christian? teach
That which completes, includes, absorbs 250
Both mighty unrevolving orbs
In one informing masterless
Master-idea of consciousness --
All differences as these indeed
Are chess play, conjuring. "Proceed!" 255
Nay! I'll go back. The exposition
Above, has points. But simple fission
Has reproduced a different bliss,
At last a heterogenesis!

Bard check- The metaphysics of these verses 260
mates himself. Is perfectly absurd. My curse is
Consciousness No sooner in an iron word
and Christi- I formulate my thought than I

anity. Perceive the same to be absurd
Dhyanna and (Tannhauser). So for this, Sir, why! 265
Hinduism. Your metaphysics in your teeth!
Sammāsādhī and Confer A. Crowley, "Berashith."
Buddhism. But hear! The Christian is a Dualist; {PAGE 170}
Such view our normal consciousness
Tells us. I'll quote you now if you list 270
From Tennyson. It isn't much;
(Skip this and 'twill be even less)
He says: "I am not what I see, {#38}
And other than the things I touch." <<1>>
How lucid is our Alfred T.! 275
The Hindu, an Advaitist,
Crosses off Maya from the list;
Believes in one -- exactly so,
Dhyana-consciousness, you know!
May it not be that one step further 280
"Tis lotused Buddha roaring murder!"? {#39}
Nibbana is the state above you
Christians and them Hindus -- Lord love you! --

Where Nothing is perceived as such.

<<1. "In Memoriam.">>

Bard is pleased This clever though doth please me much. 285
with himself.

Poetee mani- But if das Essen is das Nichts --
fests a natural Ha! Hegel's window! Ancient Lichts!
irritation. And two is one and one is two --
"Bother this nonsense! Go on, do!"
My wandering thoughts you well recall! 290
I focus logic's perfect prism:
Lo! the informing syllogism!

Sabbe pi Duk- The premiss major. life at best
kham! Is but a sorry sort of jest;
< Sorrow.>> Mocking the soul foredoomed to pain.
In any case, its run must range
Through countless miseries of change.
So far, no farther, gentle youth!
The mind can see. So much, no more. 300
So runs the premiss major plain;
Identical, the Noble truth

First of the Buddha's Noble Four!

Beyond The premiss minor. I deplore
thought, is These limitations of the mind. 305
there hope? I strain my eyes until they're blind,
Maya again. And cannot pierce the awful veil {PAGE 171}
Vision of the That masks the primal cause of being.
Visible image With all respect to Buddha, fleeing
of the Soul of The dreadful problem with the word 310
Nature, whose "Who answers, as who asks, hath erred,"
name is Fat- I must decidedly insist
ality. On asking why these things exist.
My mind refuses to admit
All-Power can be all-Wickedness. 315
-- Nay! but it may! What shadows flit
Across the awful veil of mist?
What thoughts invade, insult, impress?
There comes a lightning of my wit
And sees -- nor good nor ill address 320

Itself to task, creation's ill,
But mere law without a will, {#40}
Nothing resolved in something, fit
Phantom of dull stupidity,
And evolution's endless stress 325
All the inanity to knit
Thence: such a dark device I see!
Nor lull my soul in the caress
Of Buddha's "Maya fashioned it." {#41}
My mind seems ready to agree; 330
But still my senses worry me.

Futility of all Nor can I see what sort of gain
investigations God finds in this creating pain;
of the Mind Nor do the Vedas help me here.
into the First Why should the Paramatma cease {#42} 335
Cause. From its eternity of peace,
Develop this disgusting drear
System of stars, to gather again
Involving, all the realm of pain,
Time, space, to that eternal calm? 340
Blavatsky's Himalayan Balm {#43}
Aids us no whit -- if to improve
Thus the All-light, All-life, All-love,
By evolution's myrrh and gall,

It would not then have been the All. 345

Faith our only Thus all conceptions fail and fall.
alternative to But see the Cyclopaedia-article
Despair? So On "Metaphysics"; miss no particle {PAGE 172}
says Mansel. Of thought! How ends the brave B.D.,
Summarising Ontology? 350
"This talk of 'Real' is a wraith.
Our minds are lost in war of word;
The whole affair is quite absurd --
Behold! the righteous claims of Faith!"
(He does not rhyme you quite so neatly; 355
But that's the sense of it completely.)

The Advaitist I do not feel myself inclined,
position. In spite of my irreverent mind,
So lightly to pass by the schemes
Of Fichte, Schelling, Hegel (one, 360

Small though the apparent unison),
As if they were mere drunken dreams;
For the first word in India here
From Koromandl to Kashmir
Says the same thing these Germans said: 365
"Ekam Advaita!"{#44} one, not two!
Thus East and West from A to Z
Agree -- Alas! so do not you?
(It matters nothing -- you, I find,
are but a mode of my own mind.) 370

Mind's superior As far as normal reasoning goes,
functions. I must admit my concepts close
Exactly where my worthy friend,
Great Mansel, says they ought to end.
But here's the whole thing in a word: 375
Olympus in a nutshell! I
Have a superior faculty
To reasoning, which makes absurd,
Unthinkable and wicked too,
A great deal that I know is true! 380
In short, the mind is capable,
Besides mere ratiocination,
Of twenty other things as well,
The first of which is concentration!

Does truth Here most philosophers agree; 385
make itself in- Claim that the truth must so intend,
stantly appa- Explain at once all agony
rent? Not Of doubt, make people comprehend {PAGE 173}
reason. As by lightning flash, solve doubt
But the results And turn all Nature inside out: 390
of concentra- And, if such potency of might
tion do so. Hath Truth, once state the truth aright,
Whence came the use of all those pages
Millions together -- mighty sages
Whom the least obstacle enrages? 395
Condemn the mystic if he prove
Thinking less valuable than love?
Well, let them try their various plans!
Do they resolve that doubt of man's?
How many are Hegelians? 400
Thus, though I hold him mostly true.

But, to teach others that same view?
Surely long years develop reason. {#45}
After long years, too, in thy season
Bloom, Concentration's midnight flower! 405
After much practice to this end
I gain at last the long sought power
(Which you believe you have this hour,
But certainly have not, my friend!)
Of keeping close the mind to one 410
Thing at a time -- suppose, the Sun.
I gain this (Reverence to Ganesh'!){#46}
And at that instant comprehend
(The past and future tenses vanish)
What Fichte comprehends. Division, 415
Thought, wisdom, drop away. I see
The absolute identity
Of the beholder and the vision.

Some poetry. There is a lake<<1>> amid the snows
Wherein five glaciers merge and break. 420
Oh! the deep brilliance of the lake!
The roar of ice that cracks and goes
Crashing within the water! Glows
The pale pure water, shakes and slides
The glittering sun through emerald tides, 425
So that faint ripples of young light
Laugh on the green. Is there a night {PAGE 174}

So still and cold, a frost so chill,
That all the glaciers be still?
Yet in its peace no frost. 430
<<1. This simile for the mind and its impressions, which must be stilled
before the sun of the soul can be reflected, is common in Hindu literature.
The five glaciers are, of course, the senses.>>
Arise!
Over the mountains steady stand,
O sun of glory, in the skies
Alone, above, unmoving! Brand
Thy sigil, thy resistless might, 435
The abundant imminence of light!
Ah!
O in the silence, in the dark,
In the intangible, unperfumed,
In gusty abyss, abide and mark 440

The mind's magnificence assumed
In the soul's splendour! Here is peace;
Here earnest of assured release.
Here is the formless all-pervading
Spirit of the World, rising, fading 445
Into a glory subtler still.
Here the intense abode of Will
Closes its gates, and in the hall
Is solemn sleep of festival.
Peace! Peace! Silence of peace! 450
O visionless abode! Cease! Cease!
Through the dark veil press on! The veil
Is rent asunder, the stars pale,
The suns vanish, the moon drops,
The chorus of the spirit stops, 455
But one note swells. Mightiest souls
Of Bard and music maker, rolls
Over your loftiest crowns the wheel
Of that abiding bliss. Life flees
Down corridors of centuries 460
Pillar by pillar, and is lost.
Life after life in wild appeal
Cries to the master; he remains
And thinks not.
The polluting tides 465
Of sense roll shoreward. Arid plains
Of wave-swept sea confront me. Nay!
Looms yet the glory through the grey,

And in the darkest hours of youth
I yet perceive the essential truth, 470 {PAGE 175}
Know as I know my consciousness,
That all division's hosts confess
A master, for I know and see
The absolute identity
Of the beholder and the vision. 475

Fact replacing How easy to excite derision
folklore, the In the man's mind! Why, fool, I think
Christian snig- I am as clever as yourself,
gers. Let him At least as skilled to wake the elf
beware. Of jest and mockery in a wink. 480
I can dismiss with sneers as cheap
As yours this fabric of my own,

One banner of my mind o'erthrown
Just at my will. How true and deep
Is Carroll{#47} when his Alice cries: 485
"It's nothing but a pack of cards!"
There's the true refuge of the wise;
To overthrow the temple guards,
Deny reality.

For I speak And now 490
subtly. (I'll quote you Scripture anyhow)
What did the Sage mean when he wrote
(I am the Devil when I quote)
"The mere terrestrial-minded man
Knows not the Things of God, nor can 495
Their subtle meaning understand?"
A sage, I say, although he mentions
Perhaps the best of his inventions,
God.

Results of prac- For, at first, this practice leads 500
tice. The poet To holy thoughts (the holy deeds
abandons all to Precede success) and reverent gaze
find Truth. Upon the Ancient One of Days,
Beyond which fancy lies the Truth.
To find which I have left my youth, 505
All I held dear, and sit alone
Still meditating, on my throne
Of Kusha-grass,{#48} and count my beads,
Murmur my mantra,{#49} till recedes

The world of sense and thought -- I sink 510 {PAGE 176}
To -- what abyss's dizzy brink?
And fall! And I have ceased to think!
That is, have conquered and made still
Mind's lower powers by utter Will.

Nothing. The It may be that pure Nought will fail 515
Apotheosis of Quite to assuage the needs of thought;
Realism and But -- who can tell me whether Nought
Idealism alike. Untried, will or will not avail?

Gayatri. Aum! Let us meditate aright{#50}
On that adorable One Light, 520
Divine Savitri! So may She

Illume our minds! So mote it be!

Is "The Soul I find some folks think me (for one)
of Osiris" a So great a fool that I disclaim
Hymn Book? Indeed Jehovah's hate for shame 525
How verse is That man to-day should not be weaned
written. Of worshipping so foul a fiend
Prayer. In presence of the living Sun,
And yet replace him oiled and cleaned
By the Egyptian Pantheon, 530
The same thing by another name.
Thus when of late Egyptian Gods
Evoked ecstatic periods
In verse of mine, you thought I praised
Or worshipped them -- I stand amazed. 535
I merely wished to chant in verse
Some aspects of the Universe,
Summed up these subtle forces finely,
And sang of them (I think divinely)
In name and form: a fault perhaps -- 540
Reviewers are such funny chaps!
I think that ordinary folk,
Though, understood the things I spoke.
For Gods, and devils too, I find
Are merely modes of my own mind! 545
The poet needs enthusiasm!
Verse-making is a sort of spasm,
Degeneration of the mind,
And things of that unpleasant kind. {PAGE 177}
So to the laws all bards obey 550

I bend, and seek in my own way
By false things to expound the real.
But never think I shall appeal
To Gods. What folly can compare
With such stupidity as prayer? 555

Marvellous an- some years ago I thought to try
swer to prayer. Prayer{#51} -- test its efficacy.
Prayer and I fished by a Norwegian lake.
averages. "O God," I prayed, "for Jesus' sake
Grant thy poor servant all his wish! 560
For every prayer produce a fish!"
Nine times the prayer went up the spout,

And eight times -- what a thumping trout!
(This is the only true fish-story
I ever heard -- give God the glory!) 565
The thing seems cruel now, of course.
Still, it's a grand case of God's force!
But, modern Christians, do you dare
With common prudence to compare
The efficacy of prayer? 570
Who will affirm of Christian sages
That prayer can alter averages?
The individual case allows
Some chance to operate, and thus
Destroys its value quite for us. 575
So that is why I knit my brows
And think -- and find no thing to say
Or do, so foolish as to pray.
"So much for this absurd affair{#52}
About" validity of prayer. 580
But back! Let once again address
Our minds to super-consciousness!

Are the results You weary me with proof enough
of meditation That all this meditation stuff
due to auto- Is self-hypnosis. Be it so! 585
hypnosis? Do you suppose I did not know?
Still, to be accurate, I fear
The symptoms are entirely strange.
If I were hard, I'd make it clear
That criticism must arrange 590 {PAGE 178}
An explanation different
For this particular event.

Though surely I may find it queer
That you should talk of self-hypnosis,
When your own faith so very close is 595
To similar experience;
Lies, in a word, beneath suspicion
To ordinary common sense
And logic's emery attrition.
I take, however, as before 600
Your own opinions, and demand
Some test by which to understand
Huxley's piano-talk,<<1>> and find
If my hypnosis may not score

A point against the normal mind. 605
(As you are pleased to term it, though!
I gather that you do not know;
Merely infer it.)

<<1. See his remarks upon the Rational piano, and the conclusions to which
the evidence of its senses would lead it.>>

A test. The Here's a test!
artist's concen- What in your whole life is the best 610
tration on his Of all your memories? They say
work. You paint -- I think you should one day
Take me to see your Studio --
Tell me, when all your work goes right,
Painted to match some inner light, 615
What of the outer world you know!
Surely, your best work always finds
Itself sole object of the mind's.
In vain you ply the brush, distracted
By something your have heard or acted. 620
Expect some tedious visitor --
Your eye runs furtive to the door;
Your hand refuses to obey;
You throw the useless brush away.
I think I hear the Word you say! 625

Yogi but a I practice then, with conscious power
more vigorous Watching my mind, each thought controlling,
artist. Indig- Hurling to nothingness, while rolling
nation of poet The thunders after lightning's flower, {PAGE 179}
suppressed by Destroying passion, feeling, thought, 630
Yogi and philo- The very practice you have sought

sopher alike. Unconscious, when you work the best.
I carry on one step firm-pressed
Further than you the path, and you
For all my trouble, comment: "True! 635
"Auto-hypnosis. Very quaint!"{#53}
No one supposes me a Saint -- {#54}
Some Saints to wrath would be inclined
With such a provocation pecked!
But I remember and reflect 640
That anger makes a person blind,
And my own "Chittam" I'd neglect.

Besides, it's you, and you, I find,
Are but a mode of my own mind.

Objectivity of But then you argue, and with sense; 645
universe not "I have this worthy evidence
discussed. That things are real, since I cease
The painter's ecstasy of peace,
And find them all unchanged." To-day
I cannot brush that doubt away; 650
It leads to tedious argument
Uncertain, in the best event:
Unless, indeed, I should invoke
The fourth dimension, clear the smoke
Psychology still leaves. This question 655
Needs a more adequate digestion.
Yet I may answer that the universe
Of meditation suffers less
From time's insufferable stress
Than that of matter. On, thou puny verse! 660
Weak tide of rhyme! Another argument
Will block the railway train of blague you meant
To run me over with. This world
Or that? We'll keep the question furled.

Preferability of But, surely, (let me corner you!)
concentration- "You wish the painter-mood were true!" 666
state to the To leave the hateful world, and see
normal. Perish the whole Academy;
So you remain for ever sated.
On your own picture concentrated! 670 {PAGE 180}

Fifty years of But as for me I have a test
Europe worth Of better than the very best.

a cycle of "Respice finem!" Judge the end;
Cathay. The man, and not the child, my friend!
Method of First ecstasy of Pentecost, 675
Christ. The (You now perceive my sermon's text.)
poet a Chris- First leap to Sunward flings you vexed
tian. By glory of its own riposte
Back to your mind. But gathering strength
And nerve, you come (ah light!) at length 680
To dwell awhile in the caress
Of that strange super-consciousness.

After one memory -- O abide!
Vivid Savitri lightning-eyed! --
Nothing is worth a thought beside. 685
One hint of Amrita{#55} to taste
And all earth's wine may run to waste!
For by this very means Christ gained{#56}
His glimpse into that world above
Which he denominated "Love." 690
Indeed I think the man attained
By some such means -- I have not strained
Out mind by chance of sense or sex
To find a way less iron-brained
Determining direction "x;"{#57} 695
I know not if these Hindu methods
Be best ('tis no such life and death odds,
Since suffering souls to save or damn
Never existed). So I fall
Confessing: Well, perchance I am 700
Myself a Christian after all!

With reserva- So far at least. I must concede
tions. Deus in Christ did attain in every deed;
machina. Pon- Yet, being an illiterate man,
tius Pilate as a Not his to balance or to scan, 705
Surrey Magis- To call God stupid or unjust!
trate. He took the universe on trust;
He reconciled the world below
With that above; rolled eloquence
Steel-tired{#58} o'er reason's "why?" and "whence?" 710
Discarded all proportion just,
And thundered in our ears "I know,"
And bellowed in our brains "ye must." {PAGE 181}

Mystic mean- Such reservations -- and I class

ing of Pente- Myself a Christian: let us pass 715
cost. Back to the text whose thread we lost,
And see what means this "Pentecost."

Super-con- This, then, is what I deem occurred
sciousness is (According to our Saviour's word)
the gift of the That all the Saints at Pentecost 720
Holy Ghost. Received the gift -- the Holy Ghost;
Such gift implying, as I guess,

This very super-consciousness. {#59}
Miracles follow as a dower;
But ah! they used that fatal power 725
And lost the Spirit in the act.
This may be fancy or a fact;
At least it squares with super-sense
Or "spiritual experience."

Poet not a You do not well to swell the list 730
materialist. Of horrid things to me imputed
Mohammed's By calling me "materialist."
ideas. At least this thought is better suited
To Western minds than is embalmed
Among the doctrines of Mohammed, 735
The dogma parthenogenetic <<1>>
As told me by a fat ascetic.
He said: "Your worthy friends may lack you late,
But learn how Mary was immaculate!"
I sat in vague expectant bliss. 740

<<1. Concerning conception of a virgin.>>

Verbatim re- The story as it runs is this:
port of Moslem (I quote my Eastern friend {#60} verbatim!)
account of the "The Virgin, going to the bath,
Annunciation Found a young fellow in her path,
And turned, prepared to scold and rate him! 745
'How dare you be on me encroaching?'
The beautiful young gentleman,
With perfect courtesy approaching,
Bowed deeply, and at once began:
'Fear nothing, Mary! All is well!' 750
I am the angel Gabriel.'
She bared her right breast;" (query why?)
"The angel Gabriel let fly {PAGE 182}

Out of a silver Tube a Dart
Shooting God's Spirit to her heart" -- {#61} 755
This beats the orthodox Dove-Suitor!
What explanation could be cuter
Than -- Gabriel with a pea-shooter?

Degradation of In such a conflict I stand neuter.
symbols. Es- But oh! mistake not gold for pewter! 760

sentient identity The plain fact is: materialise
of all forms of What spiritual fact you choose,
existence. And all such turn to folly -- lose
The subtle splendour, and the wise
Love and dear bliss of truth. Beware 765
Lest your lewd laughter set a snare
For any! Thus and only thus
Will I admit a difference
'Twixt spirit and the things of sense.
What is the quarrel between us? 770
Why do our thoughts so idly clatter?
I do not care one jot for matter,
One jot for spirit, while you say
One is pure ether, one pure clay.

Practical ad- I've talked too long: you're very good -- 775
vice. I only hope you've understood!
Remember that "conversion" lurks
Nowhere behind my words and works.
Go home and think! my talk refined
To the sheer needs of your own mind. 780
You cannot bring God in the compass
Of human thought? Up stick and thump ass!
Let human thought itself expand --
Bright Sun of Knowledge, in me rise!
Lead me to those exalted skies 785
To live and love and understand!
Paying no price, accepting nought --
The Giver and the Gift are one
With the Receiver -- O thou Sun
Of thought, of bliss transcending thought, 790
Rise where division dies! Absorb
In glory of the glowing orb
Self and its shadow! {PAGE 183}

Christian Now who dares

mystics not Call me no Christian? And, who cares? 795
true Christians. Read; you will find the Master of Balliol,
What think ye Discarding Berkeley, Locke, and Paley, 'll
of Crowley? Resume such thoughts and label clear
His interlo- "My Christianity lies here!"
cutor dis- With such religion who finds fault? 800
missed, not Stay, it seems foolish to exalt

with a jest, but Religion to such heights as these,
with a warning. Refine the actual agonies
To nothings, lest the mystic jeer
"So logic bends its line severe 805
Back to my involuted curve!"
These are my thoughts. I shall not swerve.
Take them, and see what dooms deserve
Their rugged grandeur -- heaven or hell?
Mind the dark doorway there!{#62} Farewell! 810

Poet yawns. How tedious I always find
That special manner of my mind!

Aum! Aum! let us meditate aright
On that adorable One Light,
Divine Savitri! So may She 815
Illumine our minds! so mote it be!

{PAGE 184}

NOTES TO ASCENSION DAY AND PENTECOST

"Blind Chesterton is sure to err,
And scan my work in vain;
I am my own interpreter,
And I will make it plain."

NOTE TO INTRODUCTION
{columns commence}

1 WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

AN APPRECIATION

BY ALEISTER CROWLEY.<<1>>

<<1. The lamented decease of the above gentleman forbids all hope (save through the courtesy of Sir Oliver Lodge) of the appearance of the companion article. -- A.C.>>

IT is a lamentable circumstance that so many colossal brains (W. H. Mallock, &c.) have been hitherto thrown away in attacking what is after all a problem of mere academic interest, the authorship of the plays our fathers accepted as those of Shakespeare. To me it seems of immediate and vital importance to do for Shakespeare what Verrall has done so ably for Euripides. The third tabernacle must be filled; Shaw and "the Human" must have their Superhuman companion. (This is not a scale: pithecanthropoid innuendo is deprecated.)

Till now -- as I write the sun bursts forth suddenly from a cloud, as if heralding the literary somersault of the twentieth century -- we have been content to accept Shakespeare as orthodox, with common sense; moral to a fault, with certain Rabelaisian leanings: a healthy tone (we say) pervades his work. Never believe it! The sex problem is his Speciality; a morbid decadence (so-called) is hidden i' th' heart o' th' rose. In other words, the divine William is the morning star to Ibsen's dawn, and Bernard Shaw's effulgence.

The superficial, the cynical, the misanthropic will demand proof of such a statement. Let it be our contemptuous indulgence to afford them what they ask.

May I premise that, mentally obsessed, monomaniac indeed, as we must now consider Shakespeare to have been on these points, he was yet artful enough to have concealed his {185A} advanced views -- an imperative necessity, if we consider the political situation, and the virginal mask under which Queen Bess hid the grotesque and hideous features of a Messaline. Clearly so, since but for this concealment even our Shakespearian scholars would have discovered so patent a fact. In some plays, too, of course, the poet deals with less dangerous topics. These are truly conventional, no doubt; we may pass them by; they are foreign to our purpose; but we will take that stupendous example of literary subterfuge -- "King Lear."<>

Let me digress to the history of my own conversion.

Syllogistically, -- All great men ("e.g." Shaw) are agnostics and subverters of morals. Shakespeare was a great man. Therefore Shakespeare was an agnostic and a subverter of morals.

"A priori" this is then certain. But --

Who killed Rousseau?

I, said Huxley

(Like Robinson Crusoe),

With arguments true, -- so

I killed Rousseau!

Beware of "a priori!" Let us find our facts, guided in the search by "a priori" methods, no doubt; but the result will this time justify us.

Where would a man naturally hide his greatest treasure? In his most perfect treasure-house.

Where shall we look for the truest thought of a great poet? In his greatest poem.

What is Shakespeare's greatest play? "King Lear."

In "King Lear," then, we may expect the final statement of the poet's mind.

The passage that first put me on the track of the amazing discovery for which the world has to thank me is to be found in Act I. Sc. iii. II. 132-149:

--

"This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune, -- often the surfeit of our own behaviour, -- we make guilty {185B} of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars; as if we were villains by necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves, and treachers by spherical predominance, drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on: an admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail, and my nativity was under "ursa major;" so that it follows I am rough and lecherous. 'Sfoot! I should have been that I am had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing."

If there is one sound philosophical dictum in the play, it is this. (I am not going to argue with astrologers in the twentieth century.)

It is one we can test. On questions of morality and religion opinions veer; but if Shakespeare was a leader of thought, he saw through the humbug of the star-gazers; if not, he was a credulous fool; not the one man of his time, not a "debauched genius" (for Sir R. Burton in this phrase has in a sense anticipated me discovery) but a mere Elizabethan.

This the greatest poet of all time? Then we must believe that Gloucester was right, and that eclipses caused the fall of Lear! Observe that before this Shakespeare has had a sly dig or two at magic. In "King John," "My lord, they say five moons were seen to-night" -- but there is no eyewitness. So in "Macbeth." In a host of spiritual suggestion there is always the rational sober explanation alongside to discredit the folly of the supernatural.

Shakespeare is like his own touchstone; he uses his folly as a stalking-horse, and under the presentation of that he shoots his wit.

Here, however, the mask is thrown off for any but the utterly besotted; Edmund's speech stands up in the face of all time as truth; it challenges the acclamation of the centuries.

Edmund is then the hero; more, he is Shakespeare's own portrait of himself;

his ways are dark -- (and, alas! his tricks are vain!) -- for why? For the fear of the conventional world about him.

He is illegitimate: Shakespeare is no true child of that age, but born in defiance of it and its prejudices.

Having taken this important step, let us slew round the rest of the play to fit it. If it fits, the law of probability comes to our aid; every coincidence multiplies the chance of our correctness in ever increasing proportion. We shall see -- and you may look up your Proctor -- that if the stars are placed just so by chance not law, then also it may be possible that Shakespeare was the wool-combing, knock-kneed, camel-backed, church-going, plaster-of-Paris, {186A} stick-in-the-mud our scholars have always made him.

Edmund being the hero, Regan and Goneril must be the heroines. So nearly equal are their virtues and beauties that our poet cannot make up his mind which shall possess him -- besides which, he wishes to drive home his arguments in favour of polygamy.

But the great theme of the play is of course filial duty; on this everything will turn. Here is a test:

"Whenever this question is discussed, let us see who speaks the language of sense, and who that of draggle-tailed emotionalism and tepid melodrama."

In the first scene the heroines, who do not care for the old fool their father - - as how could any sane women? Remember Shakespeare is here about to show the folly of filial love as such -- feel compelled, by an act of gracious generosity to a man they despise, yet pity, to say what they think will please the dotard's vanity. Also no doubt the sound commercial instinct was touched by Lear's promise to make acres vary as words, and they determined to make a final effort to get some parsnips buttered after all. Shakespeare (it is our English boast) was no long-haired squiggle self-yclept bard; but a business man -- see Bishop Blougram's appreciation of him as such.

Shall we suppose him to have deliberately blackguarded in another his own best qualities?

Note, too, the simple honesty of the divine sisters! Others, more subtle, would have suspected a trap, arguing that such idiocy as Lear's could not be genuine -- Cordelia, the Madame Humbert of the play, does so; her over-cleverness leaves her stranded: yet by a certain sliminess of dissimulation, the oiliness of frankness, the pride that apes humility, she "does" catch the best king going. Yet it avails her little. She is hanged like the foul Vivien she is. <>

Cordelia's farewell to her sisters shows up the characters of the three in strong relief. Cordelia -- without a scrap of evidence to go on -- accuses her sisters of hypocrisy and cruelty. (This could not have previously existed, or Lear would not have been deceived.)

Regan gravely rebukes her; recommends, as it were, a course of Six Easy Lessons in Minding {186B} Her Own Business; and surely it was

unparalleled insolence of the part of a dismissed girl to lecture her more favoured sister on the very point for which she herself was at that moment being punished. It is the spite of baffled dissimulation against triumphant honesty. Goneril adds a word of positive advice. "You," she says in effect, "who prate of duty thus, see you show it to him unto whom you owe it." That this advice is wasted is clear from Act V. Sc. iii., where the King of France takes the first trivial opportunity<> to be free of the vile creature he had so foolishly married.

Cordelia goes, and the sisters talk together. Theirs is the language of quiet sorrow for an old man's failing mind; yet a most righteous determination not to allow the happiness of the English people to depend upon his whims. Bad women would have rejoiced in the banishment of Kent, whom they already knew to be their enemy; these truly good women regret it. "Such unconstant starts are we like to have from him as this of Kent's banishment" (Act I. Sc. i, ll 304-5).

In Scene ii. Edmund is shown; he feels himself a man, more than Edgar: a clear-headed, brave, honourable man; but with no maggots. The injustice of his situation strikes him; he determines not to submit.<>

This is the attitude of a strong man, and a righteous one. Primogeniture is wrong enough; the other shame, no fault of his, would make the blood of any free man boil.

Gloucester enters, and exhibits himself as a prize fool by shouting in disjointed phrases what everybody knew. Great news it is, of course, and on discovering Edmund, he can think of nothing more sensible than to ask for more! "Kent banished thus! And France in choler parted! And the king gone to-night! subscrib'd his power! Confin'd to exhibition! All this done upon the gad! Edmund, how now! what news?" (Act I. Sc. ii. ll. 23-26).

Edmund "forces a card" by the simple device of a prodigious hurry to hide it. Gloucester gives vent to his astrological futilities, and falls to anxioomania in its crudest form, -- "We have seen the best of our time: machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders, follow us disquietly to our graves" (Sc. ii. ll. 125-127).

Edmund, once rid of him, gives us the {187A} plainest sense we are likely to hear for the rest of our lives; then, with the prettiest humour in the world takes the cue of his father's absurdity, and actually plays it on his enemy. Edgar's leg is not so easily pulled -- ("How long have you been a sectary astronomical?" ll. 169, 170) -- and the bastard hero, taking alarm gets right down to business.

In Scene iii. we find Lear's senile dementia taking the peculiarly loathsome forms familiar to alienists -- this part of my subject is so unpleasant that I must skim over it; I only mention it to show how anxious Shakespeare is to show his hidden meaning, otherwise his naturally delicate mind would have avoided the depiction of such phenomena.

All this prepares us for Scene iv., in which we get a glimpse of the way

Lear's attendants habitually behave. Oswald, who treats Lear throughout with perfect respect, and only shows honest independence in refusing to obey a man who is not his master, is insulted in language worthier of a bargee than a king; and when he remonstrates in dignified and temperate language is set upon by the ruffianly Kent.

Are decent English people to complain when Goneril insists that this of thing shall not occur in a royal house? She does so, in language nobly indignant, yet restrained: Lear, in the hideous, impotent rage of senility, calls her -- his own daughter -- a bastard (no insult to her, but to himself or his wife, mark ye well!). Albany enters -- a simple, orderly-minded man; he must not be confused with Cornwall, he is at the last Lear's dog; yet even he in decent measured speech sides with his wife. Is Lear quieted? No! He utters the most horrible curse, not excepting that of Count Cenci, that a father ever pronounced. Incoherent threats succeed to the boilings-over of the hideous malice of a beastly mind; but a hundred knights are a hundred knights, and a threat is a threat. Goneril had not fulfilled her duty to herself, to her people, had she allowed this monster of mania to go on.

I appeal to the medical profession; of one doctor will answer me that a man using Lear's language should be allowed control of a hundred armed ruffians [in the face of Kent's behaviour we know what weight to attach to Lear's defence: "Detested kite! thou liest" (I. iv. l. 286)], should ever be allowed outside a regularly appointed madhouse, I will cede the point, and retire myself into an asylum.

In fact, Lear is going mad; the tottering intellect, at no time strong ("tis the infirmity of age; yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself," I. i. ll. 296-7), is utterly cast down by drink and debauchery: he even sees it himself, and with a pointless bestiality from the Fool, fit companion for the -- king -- and in that word {187B} we see all the concentrated loathing of the true Shakespeare for a despotism, massed in one lurid flame, phantasmagoric horror, the grim First Act rolls down.

II.

Act II. Sc. i. adds little new to our thesis, save that in line 80 we see Gloucester (ignorant of his own son's handwriting!) accept the forged letter as genuine, as final proof, with not even the intervention of a Bertillon to excuse so palpable a folly, so egregious a crime. What father of to-day would disinherit, would hunt down to death, a beloved son, on such evidence? Or are we to take it that the eclipse gave proof unshakable of a phenomenon so portentous?

In Scene ii. we have another taste of Kent's gentlemanly demeanour; let our conventionalist interpreters defend this unwarrantable bullying if they dare! Another might be so gross, so cowardly; but not our greatest poet! A good

portion of this play, as will be shown later, is devoted to a bitter assault upon the essentially English notion that the pugilist is the supreme device of the Creator for furthering human happiness. (See "Cashel Byron's Profession" for a similar, though more logical and better-worded, attack.) Coarse and violent language continues to disgrace Lear's follower; only Gloucester, the unconscionable ass and villain of Scene i., has a word to say in his defence.

In Scene iii. we have a taste of Edgar's quality. Had this despicable youth the consciousness of innocence, or even common courage, he had surely stood to his trial. Not he! He plays the coward's part -- and his disguise is not even decent.

In Scene iv. we are shown the heroic sisters in their painful task of restraining, always with the utmost gentleness of word and demeanour, the headstrong passions of the miserable king. Lear, at first quiet in stating his fancied wrongs "Reg." 'I am glad to see your highness.' "Lear." 'Regan, I think you are; I know what reason I have to think so: if thou shouldst not be glad, I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb, Sepulchring an adult'ress. ("to Kent"). O! are you free? Some other time for that. Beloved Regan, Thy sister's naught: O Regan! she hath tied Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here: ("Points to his heart"). I can scarce speak to thee; thou'lt not believe with how deprav'd a quality -- O Regan!' "Reg." 'I pray you, sir, take patience. I have hope!'" (ll. 130-139), an excusable speech, at the first hint that he is not to have it all his own way, falls a-cursing again like the veriest drab or scullion Hamlet ever heard.

Here is a man, deprived on just cause of {188A} half a useless company of retainers. Is this wrong (even were it wrong) such as to justify the horrible curses of ll. 164-168. "All the stor'd vengeance of heaven fall On her ingrateful top! Strike her young bones, You taking airs, with lameness! You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames Into her scornful eyes!" With this he makes his age contemptible by the drivell-pathos of ll. 156-158, "Dear daughter, I confess that I am old; Age is unnecessary: on my knees I beg ('Keeling') That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food," begging what none ever thought to deny him.

Yet such is the patience of Goneril that even when goaded by all this infamous Billingsgate into speech, her rebuke is the temperate and modest ll. 198-200. "Why not by the hand, sir? How have I offended? All's not offence that indiscretion finds And dotage terms so." If we ask a parallel for such meekness under insult, calumny, and foul abuse, we must seek it not in a human story, but a divine.

The heroines see that no half measures will do, and Lear is stripped of all the murderous retinue -- what scum they are is shown by the fact that not one of them draws sword for him, or even follows him into the storm -- for him in spite of all his loathsomeness, his hatred, his revengefulness -- is Regan's gentle and loving,

"For his particular, I'll receive him gladly."

III.

In Act III. we have another illustration of the morality that passed current with the Tudors, and which only a Shakespeare had the courage to attack. Kent does not stick at treachery -- he makes one gulp of treason -- straining at the gnat of discipline, he swallows the camel of civil war.

It was then, and is even now, the practice of some -- for example, the emigres of the French Revolution -- to invite foreign invasion as a means of securing domestic reaction. The blackguardism implied is beyond language: Shakespeare was perhaps thinking of the proposal, in Mary's reign, to react to Romanism by the aid of Spanish troops. But he will go further than this, will our greatest poet; it were ill that the life of even one child should atone for mere indignity or discomfort to another, were he the greatest in the realm. To-day, we all agree; we smile or sneer if any one should differ. "King Lear got caught in the rain -- let us go and kill a million men!" is an argument not much understood of Radical Clubs, and even Jingos would pause, did they but take the precaution of indulging in a mild aperient before recording their opinions. {188B}

In Scenes iii., vi., and vii., Edmund, disguised beyond all measure with Gloucester's infamies, honourably and patriotically denounces him.

The other scenes depict the miseries which follow the foolish and the unjust; and Nemesis falls upon the ill-minded Gloucester. Yet Shakespeare is so appreciative of the virtue of compassion (for Shakespeare was, as I shall hope to prove one day, a Buddhist) that Cornwall, the somewhat cruel instrument of eternal Justice, is killed by his servant. Regan avenges her husband promptly, and I have little doubt that this act of excessive courtesy towards a man she did not live is the moral cause of her unhappy end.

I would note that we should not attempt to draw any opinions as to the author's design from the conversation of the vulgar; even had we not Carianus to show us what he thought.

IV.

Act IV. develops the plot and is little germane to our matter, save that we catch a glimpse of the unspeakably vile Cordelia, with no pity for her father's serious condition (though no doubt he deserved all he got, he was now harmless, and should have inspired compassion), hanging to him in the hope that he would now reverse his banishment and make her (after a bloody victory) sole heiress of great England.

And were any doubt left in our minds as to who really was the hero of the play, the partizanship of France should settle it. Shakespeare has never any

word but ridicule for the French; never aught but praise of England and love for her: are we to suppose that in his best play he is to stultify all his other work and insult the English for the benefit of the ridiculed and hated Frenchman?

Moreover, Cordelia reckons without her host. The British bulldogs make short work of the invaders and rebels, doubtless with the connivance of the King of France, who, with great and praiseworthy acuteness, foresees that Cordelia will be hanged, thus liberating him from his "most filthy bargain": there is but one alarm, and the whole set of scoundrels surrender. Note this well; it is not by brute force that the battle is won; for even if we exonerate the King of France, we may easily believe that the moral strength of the sisters cowed the French.

This is the more evident, since in Act V. Shakespeare strikes his final blow at the absurdity of the duel, when Edmund is dishonestly slain by the beast Edgar. Yet the poet's faith is still strong: wound up as his muse is to tragedy, he retains in Edmund the sublime heroism, the simple honesty, of the {189A} true Christian; at the death of his beloved mistress he cries, "I was contracted to them both: all three
Now marry in an instant -- "

At the moment of death his great nature (self-accusatory, as the finest so often are) asserts itself, and he forgives even the vilest of the human race, -
- "I pant for life: some good I mean to do
Despite of mine own nature.<>
Quickly send, Be brief in it, to the castle; for my writ Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia. Nay, send in time" (ll. 245-249).

And in that last supreme hour of agony he claims Regan as his wife, as if by accident; it is not the passionate assertion of a thing doubtful, but the natural reference to a thing well known and indisputable.

And in the moment of his despair; confronted with the dead bodies of the splendid sisters, the catafalque of all his hopes, he can exclaim in spiritual triumph over material disaster -- the victory of a true man's spirit over Fate --

"Yet Edmund was beloved."

Edgar is left alive with Albany, alone of all that crew; and if remorse could touch their brutal and callous souls (for the degeneration of the weakling, well-meaning Albany, is a minor tragedy), what hell could be more horrible than the dragging out of a cancerous existence in the bestial world of hate their hideous hearts had made, now, even for better men, for ever dark and gloomy, robbed of the glory of the glowing Goneril, the royal Regan, and only partially redeemed by the absence of the harlot Cordelia and the monster Lear.

V.

It may possibly be objected by the censorious, by the effete parasites of a grim conventionalism, that I have proved too much. Even by conventional standards Edmund, Goneril, and Regan appear angels. Even on the moral point, the sisters, instead of settling down to an enlightened and by no means overcrowded polygamy, prefer to employ poison. This is perhaps true, of Goneril at least; Regan is, if one may distinguish between star and star, somewhat the finer character.

This criticism is perhaps true in part; but I will not insult the intelligence of my readers. I will leave it to them to take the obvious step and work backwards to the re-exaltation of Lear, Cordelia, Edgar and company, to the heroic fields of their putty Elysium (putty, not {189B} Putney) in their newly-demonstrated capacity as "unnatural" sons, daughters, fathers, and so on.

But I leave it. I am content -- my work will have been well done -- if this trifling essay be accepted as a just installment towards a saner criticism of our holiest writers, a juster appreciation of the glories of our greatest poet, a {190A upper column breaks} possibility jejune yet assuredly historic attempt to place for the first time William Shakespeare on his proper pedestal as an early disciple of Mr. George Bernard Shaw; and by consequence to carve myself a little niche in the same temple: the smallest contributions will be thankfully received. {190B upper column breaks out to full page for one line.}

NOTES TO ASCENSION DAY

{Columns resume}

1. "I flung out of chapel.{#1}" -- Browning, "Xmas Eve," III. last line.
3. "Venus' Bower and Osiris' Tomb."{#2} -- Crowley "Tannhauser."
5. "God."{#3} -- Hebrew HB:Aleph-Lamed-Heh-Yod-Memfinal, Gen. iii. 5.
5. "gods."{#4} -- Hebrew HB:Aleph-Lamed-Heh-Yod-Memfinal, Gen. iii. 5.

The Revisers, seeing this most awkward juxtaposition, have gone yet one step lower and translated both words by "God." In other passages, however, they have been compelled to disclose their own dishonesty and translate HB:Aleph-Lamed-Heh-Yod-Memfinal by "gods."

For evidence of this the reader may look up such passages as Ex. xviii. 11; Deut. xxxii. 17; Ps. lxxxii. [in particular, where the word occurs twice, as also the word HB:Aleph-Lamed. But the revisers twice employ the word "God" and once the word "gods." The A. V. has "mighty" in one case]; Gen. xx. 13, where again the verb is plural; Sam. xxviii. 13, and so on.

See the Hebrew Dictionary of Gesenius (trans. Tregelles), Bagster, 1859, "s.v.," for proof that the Author is on the way to the true interpretation of these conflicting facts, as now established -- see Huxley, H. Spencer, Kuenen, Reuss, Lippert, and others -- and his orthodox translator's infuriated snarls (in brackets) when he suspects this tendency to accept

facts as facts.

6. "Soul went down."{#5} -- "The Questions of King Milinda," 40-45, 48, 67, 86-89, 111, 132.

7. "The metaphysical lotus-eyed."{#6} -- Gautama Buddha.

10. "Childe Roland."{#7} -- Browning, "Dramatic Romances."

11. "Two hundred thousand Trees."{#8} -- Browning wrote about 200,000 lines.

13. "Your Reverence."{#9} -- The imaginary Aunt Sally for the poetic cocoanut.<>

16. "'God's right use of it.'"{#10} -- "And many an eel, though no adept in god's right reason for it, kept Gnawing his kidneys half a year." -- Shelley, "Peter Bell the Third."

17. "One tree."{#11} -- Note the altered value of {190A} the metaphor, such elasticity having led Prof. Blumengarten to surmise them to be india-rubber trees.

27. "'Truth, that's the gold.'"{#12} -- "Two Poets of Croisic," clii. 1, and elsewhere.

28. "'I, you, or Simpkin.'"{#13} -- "Inn Album," l. 143. "Simpkin" has nothing to do with the foaming grape of Eastern France.

36. "Aischulos."{#14} -- See Agamemnon (Browning's translation), Preface.

40. "Aristobulus."{#15} -- May be scanned elsehow by pedants. Cf. Swinburne's curious scansion: Aristophanes. But the scansion adopted here gives a more creditable rhyme.

42. GR:Beta-alpha-tau-rho-alpha-chi-omicron-mu-epsilon-omicron-mu-alpha-chi-iota-alpha.{#16} -- Aristophanes Batrachoi.

46. "Mine of so many pounds -- pouch even pence of it?"{#17} -- This line was suggested to me by a large holder of Westralians.

47. "Something easier."{#18} -- "Christmas Eve and Easter Day."

51. "Newton."{#19} -- Mathematician and physicist of repute.

51. "Faraday."{#20} -- See Dictionary of National Biography.

64. "I, of the Moderns, have alone Greek."{#21} -- As far as they would let me. I know some.

74. "Beard."{#22} -- " 150. A Barba Senioris Sanctissimi pendet omnis ornatus omnium: & influentia; nam omnia appellantur ab illa barba, Influentia.

"151. His est ornatus omnium orantum: Influentie superiores & inferiores omnes respiciunt istam Influentiam.

"152. Ab ista influentia dependet vita omnium.

"153. Ab hac influentia dependent coeli & terra; pluviae beneplaciti; & alimenta omnium.

"154. Ab hac influentia venit providentia omnium. Ab hac influentia dependent omnes exercitus superiores & inferiores.

"155. Tredecim fontes olei magnificentiae boni, dependent a barba hujus influentiae gloriosae; & omnes emanant in Microprosopum.

"156. Ne dicas omnes; sed novem ex iis inveniuntur ad inflectenda judicia.

"157. Et quando haec influenza aequaliter pendet usque ad praecordia omnes Sancitates Sancitatum Sancitatis ab illa dependent. {190B}

"158. In istam influentiam extenditur expansio aporrhoeae supernae, quae est caput omnium capitum: quod non cognoscitur nec perficitur, quodque non norunt nec superi, nec inferi: proterea omnia ab ista influenza dependent.

"159. In hanc barbam tria capita de quibus diximus, expandantur, & omnia consociantur in hac influenza, & inveniuntur in ea.

"160. Et propterea omnis ornatus ornatuum ab ista influenza dependent.

"161. Istaee literae, quae dependent ab hoc Seniore, omnes pendent in ista barba, & consociantur in ista influenza.

"162. Et pendent in ea ad stabiliendas literas alteras.

"163. Nisi enim illae literae ascenderent in Seniore, reliquae istae literae non stabilirentur.

"164. Et proterea dicit Moses cum opus esset: Tetragrammaton, Tetragrammaton bis: & ita ut accentus distinguat utrumque.

"165. Certe enim ab influenza omnia dependent.

"166. Ab ista influenza ad reverentiam adiguntur superna & inferna, & flectuntur coram ea.

"167. Beatus ille, qui ad hac usque per tingit.

"Idra Suta, seu Synodus minor." Sectio VI.

"496. "Forehead." {#23} -- Fons Cranii est frons ad visitandum: (Al. ad eradicandum) peccatoras.

"497. Et cum ista frons detegitur tunc excitantur Domini Judiciorum, contra illos qui non erubescunt in operibus suis.

"498. Haec frons ruborem habet roseum. Sed illo tempore, cum frons Senioris erga hanc frontem detegitur, haec apparent alba ut nix.

"499. Et illa hora vocatur Tempus beneplaciti pro omnibus.

"500. In libro Dissertationis Scholae Raf Jebha Senis dicitur: Frons est receptaculum frontis Senioris. Sin minus, litera Cheth inter duas reliquas interponitur, justa illud: (Num. xxiv. 17) HB:Vau-Mem-Heh-Tzaddifinal et confinget angulos Moab.

"501. Et alibi diximus, quod etiam vocetur HB:Nun-Tzaddi-Heh, literis vicinis permutatis: id est, superatio.

"502. Multae autem sunt Superationes: ita ut Superatio alia elevata sit in locum alium: & aliae dentur Superationes quae extenduntur in totum corpus.

"503. Die Sabbathi autem tempore precum pomeridianarum, ne excitentur judicia, detegitur frons Senioris Sanctissimi.

"504. Et omnia judicia subiguntur; & quamvis extent, tamen non exercentur. (Al. et sedantur.)

"505. Ab hac fronte dependent viginti quatuor tribunalia, pro omnibus illis, qui protervi sunt in operibus.

"506. Sicut scriptum est: (Ps. lxxii. 11.) Et dixerunt: quomodo sit Deus? Et estne scientia in excelso? {191A}

"507. At vero viginti saltem sunt. cur adduntur quatuor? nimirum respectu suppliciorum, tribunalium inferiorum, quae a supernis dependent.

"508. Remenent ergo viginti. Et propterea neminem supplicio capitali afficiunt, donec compleverit & ascenderit ad viginti annos; respectu viginti horum tribunalium.

"509. Sed in thesi nostra arcana docuimus, per ista respici viginti quatuor libros qui continentur in Lege.

"Idra Suta, seu Synodus minor." Sectio XIIIv

77. "Chains." {#24} -- Sakka"h"a-di"tt"hi. Vi"k"iki"kkh"a, silabbata-paramasa, kama, patigha, ruparaga, aruparaga, mano, uddha"kk"a, avi"gg"a.

81. "'Who asks doth err.'" {#25} -- Arnold, "light of Asia."

83. "You." {#26} -- You!

86. "'O'erleaps itself and falls on the other.'" {#27} -- "Macbeth," I. vii. 27.

92. "English." {#28} -- This poem is written in English.

94. "I cannot write." {#29} -- This is not quite true. For instance: {8 lines in what looks like Tibetan lettering}

This, the opening stanza of my masterly poem on Ladak, reads: -- "The way was long, and the wind was cold: the Lama was infirm and advanced in years; his prayer-wheel, to revolve which was his only pleasure, was carried by a disciple, an orphan."

There is a reminiscence of some previous incarnation about this: European critics may possibly even identify the passage. But at least the Tibetans should be pleased.<> {191B}

97. "while their Buddha I attack." -- Many Buddhists think I fill the bill with the following remarks on --

PANSIL.{30}<<1>>

<<1. WEH NOTE: This essay may have been inspired by Blake's argument between Satan and the Archangel -- whereby Satan demonstrates that Christ broke every one of the Ten Commandments.>>

Unwilling as I am to sap the foundations of the Buddhist religion by the introduction of Prophecy's terrible catapult, Allegory. I am yet compelled by the more fearful ballista of Aristotle, Dilemma. This is the two-handed engine spoken of by the prophet Milton!<<"Lycidas," line 130.>>

This is the horn of the prophet Zeruiah, and with this am I, though no Syrian, utterly pushed, till I find myself back against the dead wall of Dogma. Only now realising how dead a wall that is, do I turn and try the effect of a hair of the dog that bit me, till the orthodox "literary"<> school of Buddhists, as grown at Rangoon, exclaim with Lear: "How sharper than a

serpent's tooth it is To have an intellect!" How is this? Listen, and hear! I find myself confronted with the crux: that, a Buddhist, convinced intellectually and philosophically of the truth of the teaching of Gotama; a man to whom Buddhism is the equivalent of scientific methods of Thought; an expert in dialectic, whose logical faculty is bewildered, whose critical admiration is extorted by the subtle vigour of Buddhist reasoning; I am yet forced to admit that, this being so, the Five Precepts<> are mere nonsense. If the Buddha spoke scientifically, not popularly, not rhetorically, then his precepts are not his. We must reject them or we must interpret them. We must inquire: Are they meant to be obeyed? Or -- and this is my theory -- are they sarcastic and biting criticisms on existence, illustrations of the First Noble Truth; "reasons," as it were, for the apotheosis of annihilation? I shall show that this is so. Let me consider them "precept upon precept," if the introduction of the Hebrew visionary is not too strong meat for the Little Mary<> of a Buddhist audience. {192B}

THE FIRST PRECEPT.

This forbids the taking of life in any form.<> What we have to note is the impossibility of performing this; if we can prove it to be so, either Buddha was a fool, or his command was rhetorical, like those of Yahweh to Job, or of Tannhauser to himself --

"Go! seek the stars and count them and explore!
Go! sift the sands beyond a starless sea!"

Let us consider what the words can mean. The "Taking of Life" can only mean the reduction of living protoplasm to dead matter: or, in a truer and more psychological sense, the destruction of personality. Now, in the chemical changes involved in Buddha's speaking this command, living protoplasm was changed into dead matter. Or, on the other horn, the fact (insisted upon most strongly by the Buddha himself, the central and cardinal point of his doctrine, the shrine of that Metaphysic which isolates it absolutely from all other religious metaphysic, which allies it with Agnostic Metaphysic) that the Buddha who had spoken this command was not the same as the Buddha before he had spoken it, lies the proof that the Buddha, by speaking this command, violated it. More, not only did he slay himself; he breathed in millions of living organisms and slew them. He could not eat nor drink nor breathe without murder implicit in each act. Huxley cites the "pitiless microscopist" who showed a drop of water to the Brahmin who boasted himself "Ahimsa" -- harmless. So among the "rights" of a Bhikkhu is medicine. He who takes quinine does so with the deliberate intention of destroying innumerable living beings; whether this is done by stimulating the phagocytes, or directly, is morally indifferent.

How such a fiend incarnate, my dear brother Ananda Maitriya, can call him "cruel and cowardly" who only kills a tiger, is a study in the philosophy of the mote and the beam!<>

Far be it from me to suggest that this is a defence of breathing, eating, and drinking. By no means; in all these ways we bring suffering and death to others, as to ourselves. But since these are inevitable acts, since suicide would be a still more cruel alternative (especially in case something should subsist below mere Rupa), the command is not to achieve {192B} the impossible, the already violated in the act of commanding, but a bitter commentary on the foul evil of this aimless, hopeless universe, this compact of misery, meanness, and cruelty. Let us pass on.

THE SECOND PRECEPT.

The Second Precept is directed against theft. Theft is the appropriation to one's own use of that to which another has a right. Let us see therefore whether or no the Buddha was a thief. The answer of course is in the affirmative. For to issue a command is to attempt to deprive another of his most precious possession -- the right to do as he will; that is, unless, with the predestinarians, we hold that action is determined absolutely, in which case, of course, a command is as absurd as it is unavoidable. Excluding this folly, therefore, we may conclude that if the command be obeyed -- and those of Buddha have gained a far larger share of obedience than those of any other teacher -- the Enlightened One was not only a potential but an actual thief. Further, all voluntary action limits in some degree, however minute, the volition of others. If I breathe, I diminish the stock of oxygen available on the planet. In those far distant ages when Earth shall be as dead as the moon is to-day, my breathing now will have robbed some being then living of the dearest necessity of life.

That the theft is minute, incalculably trifling, is no answer to the moralist, to whom degree is not known; nor to the scientist, who sees the chain of nature miss no link.

If, on the other hand, the store of energy in the universe be indeed constant (whether infinite or no), if personality be indeed delusion, then theft becomes impossible, and to forbid it is absurd. We may argue that even so temporary theft may exist; and that this is so is to my mind no doubt the case. All theft is temporary, since even a millionaire must die; also it is universal, since even a Buddha must breathe.

THE THIRD PRECEPT.

This precept, against adultery, I shall touch but lightly. Not that I consider the subject unpleasant -- far from it! -- but since the English section of my

readers, having unclean minds, will otherwise find a fulcrum therein for their favourite game of slander. Let it suffice if I say that the Buddha -- in spite of the ridiculous membrane legend,<> one of those foul follies which idiot devotees invent only too freely -- was a confirmed and habitual adulterer. It {193A} would be easy to argue with Hegel-Huxley that he who thinks of an act commits it ("cf." Jesus also in this connection, though he only knows the creative value of desire), and that since A and not-A are mutually limiting, therefore interdependent, therefore identical, he who forbids an act commits it; but I feel that this is no place for metaphysical hair-splitting; let us prove what we have to prove in the plainest way.

I would premise in the first place that to commit adultery in the divorce Court sense is not here in question.

It assumes too much proprietary right of a man over a woman, that root of all abomination! -- the whole machinery of inheritance, property, and all the labyrinth of law.

We may more readily suppose that the Buddha was (apparently at least) condemning incontinence.

We know that Buddha had abandoned his home; true, but Nature has to be reckoned with. Volition is no necessary condition of offence. "I didn't mean to" is a poor excuse for an officer failing to obey an order.

Enough of this -- in any case a minor question; since even on the lowest moral grounds -- and we, I trust, soar higher! -- the error in question may be resolved into a mixture of murder, theft, and intoxication. (We consider the last under the Fifth Precept.)

THE FOURTH PRECEPT.

Here we come to what in a way is the fundamental joke of these precepts. A command is not a lie, of course; possibly cannot be; yet surely an allegorical order is one in essence, and I have no longer a shadow of a doubt that these so-called "precepts" are a species of savage practical joke.

Apart from this there can hardly be much doubt, when critical exegesis has done its damndest on the Logia of our Lord, that Buddha did at some time commit himself to some statement. "(Something called) Consciousness exists" is, said Huxley, the irreducible minimum of the pseudo-syllogism, false even for an enthymeme, "Cogito, ergo sum!" This proposition he bolsters up by stating that whoso should pretend to doubt it, would thereby but confirm it. Yet might it not be said "(something called) Consciousness appears to itself to exist," since Consciousness is itself the only witness to that confirmation? Not that even now we can deny some kind of existence to consciousness, but that it should be a more real existence than that of a reflection is doubtful, incredible, even inconceivable. If by consciousness we mean the normal consciousness, it is definitely untrue, since the {193B} Dhyanic consciousness includes it and denies it. No doubt "something called"

acts as a kind of caveat to the would-be sceptic, though the phrase is bad, implying a "calling." But we can guess what Huxley means.

No doubt Buddha's scepticism does not openly go quite as far as mine -- it must be remembered that "scepticism" is merely the indication of a possible attitude, not a belief, as so many good fool folk think; but Buddha not only denies "Cogito, ergo sum"; but "Cogito, ergo non sum." See "Sabbasava Sutta." par. 10.<>

At any rate Sakkyaditthi, the delusion of personality, is in the very forefront of his doctrines; and it is this delusion that is constantly and inevitably affirmed in all normal consciousness. That Dhyanic thought avoids it is doubtful; even so, Buddha is here represented as giving precepts to ordinary people. And if personality be delusion, a lie is involved in the command of one to another. In short, we all lie all the time; we are compelled to it by the nature of things themselves -- paradoxical as that seems -- and the Buddha knew it!

THE FIFTH PRECEPT.

At last we arrive at the end of our weary journey -- surely in this weather we may have a drink! East of Suez,<<"Ship me somewhere East of Suez, where a man can raise a thirst." -- R. KIPLING.>> Trombone-Macaulay (as I may surely say, when Browning writes Banjo-Byron<<"While as for Quip Hop o' my Thumb there, Banjo-Byron that twangs the strum-strum there." -- BROWNING, "Pachiarotto" (said of A. Austin).>>) tells us, a man may raise a Thirst. No, shrieks the Blessed One, the Perfected One, the Enlightened One, do not drink! It is like the streets of Paris when they were placarded with rival posters --

Ne buvez pas de l'Alcool!
L'Alcool est un poison!
and
Buvez de l'Alcool!
L'Alcool est un aliment!

We know now that alcohol is a food up to a certain amount; the precept, good enough for a rough rule as it stands, will not bear close inspection. What Buddha really commands, with that grim humour of his, is: Avoid Intoxication.

But what is intoxication? unless it be the loss of power to use perfectly a truth-telling set of faculties. If I walk unsteadily it is owing to nervous lies -- and so for all the phenomena of drunkenness. But a lie involves the assumption {194A} of some true standard, and this can nowhere be found. A doctor would tell you, moreover, that all food intoxicates: all, here as in all the universe, of every subject and in every predicate, is a matter of degree.

Our faculties never tell us true; our eyes say flat when our fingers say round; our tongue sends a set of impression to our brain which our hearing declares non-existent -- and so on.

What is this delusion of personality but a profound and centrally-seated intoxication of the consciousness? I am intoxicated as I address these words; you are drunk -- beastly drunk! -- as you read them; Buddha was as drunk as a British officer when he uttered his besotted command. There, my dear children, is the conclusion to which we are brought if you insist that he was serious!

I answer No! Alone among men then living, the Buddha was sober, and saw Truth. He, who was freed from the coils of the great serpent Theli coiled round the universe, he knew how deep the slaver of that snake had entered into us, infecting us, rotting our very bones with poisonous drunkenness. And so his cutting irony -- drink no intoxicating drinks!

--

When I go to take Pansil,<> it is in no spirit of servile morality; it is with keen sorrow gnawing at my heart. These five causes of sorrow are indeed the heads of the serpent of Desire. Four at least of them snap their fangs on me in and by virtue of my very act of receiving the commands, and of promising to obey them; if there is a little difficulty about the fifth, it is an omission easily rectified -- and I think we should all make a point about that; there is great virtue in completeness.

Yes! Do not believe that the Buddha was a fool; that he asked men to perform the impossible or the unwise.< Excuse my being so buried in "dear Immanuel Kant" (as my friend Miss Br. c.{A.C.SUB NOTE: A fast woman who posed as a bluestocking.} would say) that this biting and pregnant phrase slipped out unaware. As a rule, of course, I hate the introduction of foreign tongues into an English essay. -- A. C.>> Do not believe that the sorrow of existence is so trivial that easy rules {194B} easily interpreted (as all Buddhists do interpret the Precepts) can avail against them; do not mop up the Ganges with a duster; nor stop the revolution of the stars with a lever of lath.

Awake, awake only! let there be ever remembrance that Existence is sorrow, sorrow by the inherent necessity of the way it is made; sorrow not by volition, not by malice, not by carelessness, but by nature, by ineradicable tendency, by the incurable disease of Desire, its Creator, is it so, and the way to destroy it is by uprooting of Desire; nor is a task so formidable accomplished by any threepenny-bit-in-the-plate-on-Sunday morality, the "deceive others and self-deception will take care of itself" uprightness, but by the severe roads of austere self-mastery, of arduous scientific research, which constitute the Noble Eightfold Path.

101-105. "There's one . . . Six Six Six." {#31} -- This opinion has been

recently (and most opportunely) confirmed by the Rev. Father Simons, Roman Catholic Missionary (and head of the Corner in Kashmir Stamps), Baramulla, Kashmir.

106. "Gallup."{#32} -- for information apply to Mr. Sidney Lee.

111. "It is the number of a Man."{#33} -- Rev. xlii. 18.

117. "Fives."{#34} -- Dukes.

122. ("Elsewhere."){#35} -- See "Songs of the Spirit" and other works.

128. "the Qabalistic Balm."{#36} -- May be studied in "The Kabbalah ("sic") Unveiled" (Redway). It is much to be wished that some one would undertake the preparation of an English translation of Rabbi Jischak Ben Loria's "De Revolutionibus Animarum," and of the book "Beth Elohim."

139. "Cain."{#37} -- Gen. iv. 8.

152. "Hunyadi."{#38} -- Hunyadi Janos, a Hungarian table water.

161. "Nadi."{#39} -- For this difficult subject refer to the late Swami Vivekananda's "Raja Yoga."

167. "Tom Bond Bishop."{#40} -- Founder of the "Children's Scripture Union" (an Association for the Dissemination of Lies among Young People) and otherwise known as a philanthropist. His relationship to the author (that of uncle) has procured him this rather disagreeable immortality. He was, let us hope, no relation to George Archibald Bishop, the remarkable preface to whose dreadfully conventionally psychopathic works is this.

PREFACE<<1>>

<<1. To a collection of MSS. illustrating the "Psychopathia Sexualis" of von Kraft-Ebling. The names of the parties have been changed.>>

In the fevered days and nights under the Empire that perished in the struggle of 1870, {195A} that whirling tumult of pleasure, scheming, success, and despair, the minds of men had a trying ordeal to pass through. In Zola's "La Curee" we see how such ordinary and natural characters as those of Saccard, Maxime, and the incestuous heroine, were twisted and distorted from their normal sanity, and sent whirling into the jaws of a hell far more affrayant than the mere cheap and nasty brimstone Sheol which is the Shibboleth for the dissenter, and with which all classes of religious humbug, from the Pope to the Salvation ranter, from the Mormon and the Jesuit to that mongrel mixture of the worst features of both, the Plymouth Brother, have scared their illiterate, since hypocrisy was born, with Abel, and spiritual tyranny, with Jehovah! Society, in the long run, is eminently sane and practical; under the Second Empire it ran mad. If these things are done in the green tree of Society, what shall be done in the dry tree of Bohemianism? Art always has a suspicion to fight against; always some poor mad Max Nordau is handy to call everything outside the kitchen the asylum. Here, however, there is a substratum of truth. Consider the intolerable long

roll of names, all tainted with glorious madness. Baudelaire the diabolist, debauchee of sadism, whose dreams are nightmares, and whose waking hours delirium; Rollinat the necrophile, the poet of phthisis, the anxiomaniac; Peladan, the high priest -- of nonsense; Medes, frivolous and scoffing sensualist; besides a host of others, most alike in this, that, below the cloak of madness and depravity, the true heart of genius burns. No more terrible period than this is to be found in literature; so many great minds, of which hardly one comes to fruition; such seeds of genius, such a harvest of - - whirlwind! Even a barren waste of sea is less saddening than one strewn with wreckage.

In England such wild song found few followers of any worth or melody. Swinburne stands on his solitary pedestal above the vulgar crowds of priapistic plagiarists; he alone caught the fierce frenzy of Baudelaire's brandied shrieks, and his First Series of Poems and Ballads was the legitimate echo of that not fierier note. But English Art as a whole was unmoved, at any rate not stirred to any depth, by this wave of debauchery. The great thinkers maintained the even keel, and the windy waters lay not for their frailer barks to cross. There is one exception of note, till this day unsuspected, in the person of George Archibald Bishop. In a corner of Paris this young poet (for in his nature the flower of poesy did spring, did even take root and give some promise of a brighter bloom, till stricken and blasted in later years by the lightning of his own sins) was steadily writing day after day, night after {195B} night, often working forty hours at a time, work which he destined to entrance the world. All England should ring with his praises; by-and-by the whole world should know his name. Of these works none of the longer and more ambitious remains. How they were lost, and how those fragments we possess were saved, is best told by relating the romantic and almost incredible story of his life.

The known facts of this life are few, vague, and unsatisfactory; the more definite statements lack corroboration, and almost the only source at the disposal of the biographer is the letters of Mathilde Doriac to Mdme. J. S., who has kindly placed her portfolio at my service. A letter dated October 15, 1866, indicates that our author was born on the 23rd of that month. The father and mother of George were, at least on the surface, of an extraordinary religious turn of mind. Mathilde's version of the story, which has its source in our friend himself, agrees almost word for word with a letter of the Rev. Edw. Turle to Mrs. Cope, recommending the child to her care. The substance of the story is as follows.

The parents of George carried their religious ideas to the point of never consummating their marriage!<> This arrangement does not seem to have been greatly appreciated by the wife; at least one fine morning she was found to be enceinte. The foolish father never thought of the hypothesis which commends itself most readily to a man of the world, not to say a man of science, and adopted that of a second Messiah! He took the utmost pains

to conceal the birth of the child, treated everybody who came to the house as an emissary of Herod, and finally made up his mind to flee into Egypt! Like most religious maniacs, he never had an idea of his own, but distorted the beautiful and edifying events of the Bible into insane and ridiculous ones, which he proceeded to plagiarise.

On the voyage out the virgin mother became enamoured, as was her wont, of the nearest male, in this case a fellow-traveller. He, being well able to support her in the luxury which she desired, easily persuaded her to leave the boat with him by stealth. A small sailing vessel conveyed them to Malta, where they disappeared. The only trace left in the books of earth records that this fascinating character was accused, four years later, in Vienna, of poisoning her paramour, but thanks to the wealth and influence of her newer lover, she escaped.

The legal father, left by himself with a squalling child to amuse, to appease in his tantrums, {196A} and to bring up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, was not a little perplexed by the sudden disappearance of his wife. At first he supposed that she had been translated, but, finding that she had not left the traditional mantle behind her, he abandoned this supposition in favour of quite a different, and indeed a more plausible one. He now believed her to be the scarlet woman in the Apocalypse, with variations. On arrival in Egypt he hired an old native nurse, and sailed for Odessa. Once in Russia he could find Gog and Magog, and present to them the child as Antichrist. For he was now persuaded that he himself was the First Beast, and would ask the sceptic to count his seven heads and ten horns. The heads, however, rarely totted up accurately!

At this point the accounts of Mr. Turle and Mathilde diverge slightly. The cleric affirms that he was induced by a Tartar lady, of an honourable and ancient profession, to accompany her to Tibet "to be initiated into the mysteries." He was, of course, robbed and murdered with due punctuality, in the town of Kiev. Mathilde's story is that he travelled to Kiev on the original quest, and died of typhoid or cholera. In any case, he died at Kiev in 1839. This fixes the date of the child's birth at 1837. His faithful nurse conveyed him safely to England, where his relatives provided for his maintenance and education.

With the close of this romantic chapter in his early history we lose all reliable traces for some years. One flash alone illumines the darkness of his boyhood; in 1853, after being prepared for confirmation, he cried out in full assembly, instead of kneeling to receive the blessing of the officiating bishop, "I renounce for ever this idolatrous church;" and was quietly removed.

He told Mathilde Doriac that he had been to Eton and Cambridge -- neither institution, however, preserves any record of such admission. The imagination of George, indeed, is tremendously fertile with regard to events in his own life. His own story is that he entered Trinity College, Cambridge,

in 1856, and was sent down two years later for an article which he had contributed to some University or College Magazine. No confirmation of any sort is to be found anywhere with regard to these or any other statements of our author. There is however, no doubt that in 1861 he quarrelled with his family; went over to Paris, where he settled down, at first, like every tufthead, somewhere in the Quarter Latin; later, with Mathilde Doriac, the noble woman who became his mistress and held to him through all the terrible tragedy of his moral, mental, and physical life, in the Rue du Faubourg-Poissonniere. At his house there the rightful scene {196B} of '68 took place, and it was there too that he was apprehended after the murders which he describes so faithfully in "Abysmos." He had just finished this poem with a shriek of triumph, and had read it through to the appalled Mathilde "avec des yeux de flamme et de gestes incoherentes," when foaming at the mouth, and "hurlant de blasphemes indicibles," he fell upon her with extraordinary violence of passion; the door opened, officers appeared, the arrest was effected. He was committed to an asylum, for there could be no longer any doubt of his complete insanity; for three weeks he had been raving with absinthe and satyriasis. He survived his confinement no long time; the burning of the asylum with its inmates was one of the most terrible events of the war of 1870. So died one of the most talented Englishmen of his century, a man who for wide knowledge of men and things was truly to be envied, yet one who sold his birthright for a mess of bestlier pottage than ever Esau guzzled, who sold soul and body to Satan for sheer love of sin, whose mere lust of perversion is so intense that it seems to absorb every other emotion and interest. Never since God woke light from chaos has such a tragedy been unrolled before men, step after step toward the lake of Fire!

At his house all his writings were seized, and, it is believed, destroyed. The single most fortunate exception is that of a superbly jewelled writing-case, now in the possession of the present editor, in which were found the MSS. which are here published. Mathilde, who knew how he treasured its contents, preserved it by saying to the officer, "But, sir, that is mine." On opening this it was found to contain, besides these MSS., his literary will. All MSS. were to be published thirty years after his death, not before. He would gain no spurious popularity as a reflection of the age he lived in. "Tennyson," he says, "will die before sixty years are gone by: if I am to be beloved of men, it shall be because my work is for all times and all men, because it is greater than all the gods of chance and change, because it has the heart of the human race beating in every line." This is a patch of magenta to mauve, undoubtedly; but -- ! The present collection of verses will hardly be popular; if the lost works turn up, of course it may be that there may be found "shelter for songs that recede." Still, even here, one is, on the whole, more attracted than repelled; the author has enormous power, and he never scruples to use it, to drive us half mad with horror, or, as in his earlier most

exquisite works, to move us to the noblest thoughts and deeds. True, his debt to contemporary writers is a little obvious here and there; but these {197A} are small blemishes on a series of poems whose originality is always striking, and often dreadful, in its broader features.

We cannot leave George Bishop without a word of inquiry as to what became of the heroic figure of Mathilde Doriac. It is a bitter task to have to write in cold blood the dreadful truth about her death. She had the misfortune to contract, in the last few days of her life with him, the same terrible disease which he describes in the last poem of his collection. This shock, coming so soon after, and, as it were, as an unholy perpetual reminder of the madness and sequestration of her lover, no less than of his infidelity, unhinged her mind, and she shot herself on July 5, 1869. Her last letter to Madame J-- S-- is one of the tenderest and most pathetic ever written. She seems to have been really loved by George, in his wild, infidel fashion: "All Night" and "Victory," among others, are obviously inspired by her beauty; and her devotion to him, the abasement of soul, the prostitution of body, she underwent for and with him, is one of the noblest stories life has known. She seems to have dived with him, yet ever trying to raise his soul from the quagmire; if God is just at all, she shall stand more near to His right hand than the vaunted virgins who would soil no hem of vesture to save their brother from the worm that dieth not!

The Works of George Archibald Bishop will speak for themselves; it would be both impertinent and superfluous in me to point out in detail their many and varied excellences, or their obvious faults. The "raison d'etre," though, of their publication, is worthy of especial notice. I refer to their psychological sequence, which agrees with their chronological order. His life-history, as well as his literary remains, gives us an idea of the progression of diabolism as it really is; not as it is painted. Note also, (1) the increase of selfishness in pleasure, (2) the diminution of his sensibility to physical charms. Pure and sane is his early work; then he is carried into the outer current of the great vortex of Sin, and whirls lazily through the sleepy waters of mere sensualism; the pace quickens, he grows fierce in the mysteries of Sapphism and the cult of Venus Aversa with women; later of the same forms of vice with men, all mingled with wild talk of religious dogma and a general exaltation of Priapism at the expense, in particular, of Christianity, in which religion, however, he is undoubtedly a believer till the last (the pious will quote James ii. 19, and the infidel will observe that he died in an asylum); then the full swing of the tide catches him, the mysteries of death become more and more an obsession, and he is flung headlong into Sadism, Necrophilia, {197B} all the maddest, fiercest vices that the mind of fiends ever brought up from the pit. But always to the very end his power is unexhausted, immense, terrible. His delirium does not amuse; it appals! A man who could conceive as he did must himself have had some glorious chord in his heart vibrating to the eternal principle of Boundless Love. That

this love was wrecked is for me, in some sort a relative of his, a real and bitter sorrow. He might have been so great! He missed Heaven! Think kindly of him!

169. "Correctly rhymes."{#41} -- Such lines, however noble in sentiment, as: "A bas les Anglais! The Irish up!" will not be admitted to the competition. Irish is accented on the penultimate -- bad cess to the bloody Saxons that made it so!

The same with Tarshish (see Browning, "Pippa Passes," II., in the long speech of Blouphocks) and many others.

173. "The liar Copleston."{#42}<

Letters and Telegrams: BOLESKINE FOYERS is sufficient address.

Bills, Writs, Summonses, etc.: CAMP XI., THE BALTORO GLACIER, BALTISTAN.

O Millionaire! My lord Marquis,
Mr. Editor! My lord Viscount,
Dear Mrs. Eddy, My lord Earl,
Your Holiness the Pope! My lord,
Your Imperial Majesty! My lord Bishop,
Your Majesty! Reverend sir,
Your Royal Highness! Sir,
Dear Miss Corelli, Fellow,
Your Serene Highness! Dog!
My lord Cardinal, Mr. Congressman,
My lord Archbishop, Mr. Senator,
My lord Duke, Mr. President,
(or the feminine of any of these), as shown
by underlining it,

Courtesy demands, in view of the

("a") tribute to your genius

("b") attack on your (1) political

(2) moral

(3) social

(4) mental

(5) physical character

("c") homage to your grandeur

("d") reference to your conduct

("e") appeal to your better feelings

on page ---- of my masterpiece, "The Sword of Song," that I should send you a copy, as I do herewith, to give you an opportunity of defending yourself against my monstrous assertions, thanking me for the advertisement, or -- in short, replying as may best seem to you to suit the case.

Your humble, obedient servant,

ALEISTER CROWLEY.>> -- Bishop of Calcutta. {198A} While holding the see of Ceylon he wrote a book in which "Buddhism" is described as consisting of "devil-dances." Now, when a man, in a position to know the facts, writes a book of the subscription-cadging type, whose value for this purpose depends on the suppression of these facts, I think I am to be commended for my moderation in using the term "liar."

212. -- "Ibsen." {#43} -- Norwegian dramatist. This and the next sentence have nineteen distinct meanings. As, however, all (with one doubtful exception) are true, and taken together synthetically connote my concept, I have let the passage stand.

219. "I was Lord Roberts, he De Wet." {#44} -- "Vide" Sir A. Conan Doyle's masterly fiction, "The Great Boer War."

222. "Hill" {#45} -- An archaic phrase signifying the kopje.

223. "Ditch" {#46} -- Probably an obsolete slang term for spruit.

273. "Some" {#47} -- The reader may search modern periodicals for this theory.

282. "The Timolian" {#48} -- Timolus, who decided the musical contest between Pan and Apollo in favour of the latter.

321. "As masters teach" {#49} -- Consult Vivekananda, "op. cit.," or the "Hathayoga Pradipika." Unfortunately, I am unable to say where (or even whether) a copy of this latter work exists.

331, 332. "Stand." -- "(Stephen) or sit (Paul)." {#50} -- Acts vii. 36; Heb. xii. 2.

337. "Samadhi-Dak" {#51} -- "Ecstasy-of-meditation mail."

338. "Maha-Meru" {#52} -- The "mystic mountain" of the Hindus. See Southery's "Curse of Kehama."

339. "Gaurisankar" {#53} -- Called also Chomokankar, Devadhunga, and Everest.

341. Chogo. {#54} -- The Giant. This is the native name of "K2"; or Mount Godwin-Austen, as Col. Godwin-Austen would call it. It is the second highest known mountain in the world, as Devadhunga is the first.

356. "the history of the West" {#55} --

De Acosta (Jose) Natural and Moral History of the Indies.

Alison, Sir A. . . . History of Scotland.

Benzoni. . . . History of the New World.

Buckle. . . . History of Civilisation.

Burton, J. H. . . . History of Scotland.

Carlyle. . . . History of Frederick the Great.

Carlyle. . . . Oliver Cromwell.

Carlyle. . . . Past and Present.

Cheruel, A. . . . Dictionnaire historique de la France.

Christian, P. . . . Historie de la Magie {198B}

Clarendon, Ld. . . History of the Great Rebellion.
De Comines, P. . . Chronicle.

Edwards, Bryan. . History of the British Colonies in the W. Indies.
Elton, C. . . . Origins of English History.
Erdmann. . . . History of Philosophy. Vol. II.
Froude. . . . History of England.
Fyffe, C. A. . . History of Modern Europe.
Gardiner, S. R. . History of the Civil War in England.
Gibbon. . . . Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.
Green, J. R. . . A History of the English People.
Guizot. . . . Historie de la Civilisation.
Hallam, H. . . . State of Europe in the Middle Ages.
Hugo, V. . . . Napoleon le Petit.
Innes, Prof. C. . Scotland in the Middle Ages.
Kingscote. . . . History of the War in the Crimea.
Levi, E. . . . History de la Magie.
Macaulay, Ld. . . History of England.
McCarthy, J. . . A History of our Own Times.
Maistre, Jos. . . Oeuvres.
Michelet. . . . Historie des Templiers.
Migne, Abbe. . . Oeuvres.
Montalembert. . . The Monks of the West.
Morley, J. . . . Life of Mr. Gladstone.
Motley. . . . History of the Dutch Republic.
Napier. . . . History of the Peninsular War.
Prescott. . . . History of the Conquest of Mexico.
Prescott. . . . History of the Conquest of Peru.
Renan. . . . Vie de Jesus.
Robertson, E. W. . Historical Essays.
Roseberry, Ld. . . Napoleon.
Shakespeare. . . Histories.
Society for the
Propagation
of Religious
Truth. . . . Transactions, Vols. I. - DCLXVI.
Stevenson, R. L. . A Footnote to History.
Thornton, Ethel-
red, Rev. . . . History of the Jesuits.
Waite, A. E. . . The Real History of the Rosicrucians.
Wolseley, Ld. . . Marlborough.

The above works and many others of less importance were carefully consulted by the Author before passing these lines for the press. Their

substantial accuracy is further guaranteed by the Professors of History at Cambridge, Oxford, Berlin, Harvard, Paris, Moscow, and London. {199A} 336. "Shot his Chandra." {#56} -- Anglice, shot the moon.

380. "The subtle devlish omission." {#57} -- But what are we to say of Christian dialecticians who quote "All things work together for good" out of its context, and call this verse "Christian optimism?" See Caird's "Hegel." Hegel knew how to defend himself, though. As Goethe wrote of him:

"They thought the master too
Inclined to fuss and finick.
The students' anger grew
To frenzy Paganinic.<>
They vowed to make him rue
His work in Jena's clinic.
They came, the unholy crew,
The mystic and the cynic:
He had scoffed at God's battue,
The flood for mortal's sin -- Ichthyosaurian Waterloo!
They eyed the sage askew;
They searched him through and through
With violet rays actinic.
They asked him 'Wer bist du?'
He answered slowly 'Bin ich?'"

387. "The Fish." {#58} -- Because of GR:iota-chi-theta-epsilon-sigma, which means Fish, And very aptly symbolises Christ. -- "Ring and Book" (The Pope), ll. 89, 90.

395. "Dharma." {#59} -- Consult the Tripitaka.

409. "I cannot trace the chain." {#60} -- "How vain, indeed, are human calculations!" -- "the Autobiography of a Flea," p. 136.

412. "Table-thing." {#61} -- "Ere the stuff grow a ring-thing right to wear." -
- "The Ring and the Book," i. 17.

"This pebble-thing, o' the boy-thing."
-- CALVERLEY, "The Cock and the Bull."

442. "Caird." {#62} -- See his "Hegel."

446. "Says Huxley." {#63} -- See "Ethics and Evolution."

459. "Igdrasil." {#64} -- The Otz Chimm of the Scandinavians.

467. "Ladies' League." {#65} -- Mrs. J. S. Crowley says: "The Ladies' League Was Formed For The Promotion And Defence Of The Reformed Faith Of The Church Of England." (The capitals are hers.) I think we may accept this statement. She probably knows, and has no obvious reasons for misleading.

487. "Sattva." {#66} -- The Buddhists, denying an Atman or Soul (an idea of changless, eternal, knowledge, being, and bliss) represent the fictitious Ego of a man (or a dog) as a temporary agglomeration of particles.

Reincarnation only knocks off, as it were, some of the corners of the mass,

so that for several births the Ego is constant within limits; hence the possibility of the "magical memory." The "Sattva" is this agglomeration. See my {199B} "Science and Buddhism," "infra," for a full discussion of this point.

518. "And."{#67} -- Note the correct stress upon this word. Previously, Mr. W. S. Gilbert has done this in his superb lines:

"Except the plot of freehold land
That held the cot, and Mary, and --"

But his demonstration is vitiated by the bad iambic "and Ma-"; unless indeed the juxtaposition is intentional, as exposing the sophistries of our official prosodists.

548. "The heathen."{#68} -- "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

586. "Satan and Judas." {#69} -- At the moment of passing the final proofs I am informed that the character of Judas has been rehabilitated by Mr. Stead (and rightly: is Mr. Abington<> paid with a rope?) and the defence of Satan undertaken by a young society lady authoress -- a Miss Corelli -- who represents him as an Angel of Light, "i.e.," one who has been introduced to the Prince of Wales.

But surely there is some one who is the object of universal reprobation amongst Christians! Permit me to offer myself as a candidate. Sink, I beseech you, these sectarian differences, and combine to declare me at least Anathema Maranatha.

602. "Pangs of Death."{#70} -- Dr. Maudsley demands a panegyric upon death. It is true that evolution may bring us a moral sense of astonishing delicacy and beauty. But we are not there yet. A talented but debauched Irishman has composed the following, which I can deplore, but not refute, for this type of man is probably more prone to reproduce his species than any other. He called it "Summa Spes."

I.

Existence being sorrow,
The cause of it desire,
A merry tune I borrow
To light upon the lyre:
If death destroy me quite.
Then, I cannot lament it;
I've lived, kept life alight,
And -- damned if I repent it!

Let me die in a ditch,
Damnably drunk

Or lipping a punk,
Or in bed with a bitch!
I was ever a hog;
Muck? I am one with it!
Let me die like a dog;

Die, and be done with it! {200A}

II.

As far as reason goes,
There's hope for mortals yet:
When nothing is that knows,
What is there to regret?
Our consciousness depends
On matter in the brain;
When that rots out, and ends,
There ends the hour of pain.

III.

If we can trust to this,
why, dance and drink and revel!
Great scarlet mouths to kiss,
And sorrow to the devil!
If pangs ataxic creep,
Or gout, or stone, annoy us,
Queen Morphia, grant thy sleep!
Let worms, the dears, enjoy us!

IV.

But since a chance remains
That "I" survives the body
(So talk the men whose brains
Are made of smut and shoddy),
I'll stop it if I can.
(Ah Jesus, if Thou couldst!)
I'll go to Martaban
To make myself a Buddhist.

V.

And yet: the bigger chance

Lies with annihilation.
Follow the lead of France,
Freedom's enlightened nation!
Off! sacerdotal stealth
Of faith and fraud and gnosis!
Come, drink me: Here's thy health,

Arterio-sclerosis!<<1>>

<<1. The hardening of the arteries, which is the predisposing cause of senile decay; thus taken as the one positive assurance of death.>>

Let me die in a ditch,
Damnably drunk,
Or lipping a punk,
Or in bed with a bitch!
I was ever a hog;
Muck? I am one with it!
Let me die like a dog;
Die, and be done with it!

616. "A lizard."{#71} -- A short account of the genesis of these poems seems not out of place here. The design of an elaborate parody on {200B} Browning to be called "Ascension Day and Pentecost" was conceived (and resolved upon) on Friday, November 15, 1901. On that day I left Ceylon, where I had been for several months, practising Hindu meditations, and exposing the dishonesty of the Missionaries, in the intervals of big game shooting. The following day I wrote "Ascension Day," and "Pentecost" on the Sunday, sitting outside the dak-bangla at Madura. These original drafts were small as compared to the present poems.

Ascension Day consisted of: --

p. 144, I flung ...
p. 146, Pray do ...
p. 147, "But who ...
p. 149, Here's just ...
p. 151, I will ...
to p. 160, ... but in Hell! ...
p. 161, You see ...
to end.

Pentecost consisted of: --

p. 164, To-day ...

p. 168, How very hard ...
to p. 170, "Proceed!" ...
p. 171, My wandering thoughts ...
to p. 172, All-wickedness ...
p. 172, Nor lull my soul ...
to p. 174, ... and the vision.
p. 176, How easy ...

to end.

"Berashith" was written at Delhi, March 20 and 21, 1902. Its original title was "Crowleymas Day." It was issued privately in Paris in January 1903. It and "Science and Buddhism" are added to complete the logical sequence from 1898 till now. All, however, has been repeatedly revised. Wherever there seemed a lacuna in the argument an insertion was made, till all appeared a perfect chrysolite. Most of this was done, while the weary hours of the summer (save the mark!) of 1902 rolled over Camp Misery and Camp Despair on the Chogo Ri Glacier, in those rare intervals when one's preoccupation with lice, tinned food, malaria, insoaking water, general soreness, mental misery, and the everlasting snowstorm gave place to a momentary glimmer of any higher form of intelligence than that ever necessarily concentrated on the actual business of camp life. The rest, and the final revision, occupied a good deal of my time during the winter of 1902-1903. The MS. was accepted by the S. P. R. T. in May of this year, and after a post-final revision, rendered necessary by my Irish descent, went to press.

618. "Each life bound ever to the wheel." {#72} -- Cf. Whately, "Revelation of a Future State." {201A}

652. "This, that, the other atheist's death." {#73} -- Their stories are usually untrue; but let us follow our plan, and grant them all they ask.

709. "A cannibal." {#74} -- This word is inept, as it predicates humanity of Christian-hate-Christian.

J'accuse the English language: "anthropophagous" must always remain a comic word.

731. "The Flaming Star." {#75} -- Or Pentagram, mystically referred to Jeheshua.

732. "Zohar." {#76} -- "Splendour," the three Central Books of the Dogmatic Qabalah.

733. "Pigeon." {#77} -- Says an old writer, whom I translate roughly:

"Thou to thy Lamb and Dove devoutly bow,
But leave me, prithee, yet my Hawk and Cow:
And I approve thy Greybeard dotard's smile,

If thou wilt that of Egypt's crocodile."

746. "Lost! Lost! Lost!"{#78} -- See "The Lay of the Last Minstrel."

759. "Ain Elohim."{#79} -- "There is no God!" so our Bible. But this is really the most sublime affirmation of the Qabalist. "Ain is God."

For the meaning of Ain, and of this idea, see "Berashith," "infra." The "fool" is He of the Tarot, to whom the number O is attached, to make the meaning patent to a child.

"I insult your idol," quoth the good missionary; "he is but of dead stone. He does not avenge himself. He does not punish me." "I insult your god," replied the Hindu; "he is invisible. He does not avenge himself, nor punish me."

"My God will punish you when you die!"

"So, when you die, will my idol punish you!"

No earnest student of religion or draw poker should fail to commit this anecdote to memory.

767. "Mr. Chesterton."{#80} -- I must take this opportunity to protest against the charge brought by Mr. Chesterton against the Englishmen "who write philosophical essay on the splendour of Eastern thought."

If he confines his strictures to the translators of that well-known Eastern work the "Old Testament" I am with him; any modern Biblical critic will tell him what I mean. It took a long time, too, for the missionaries (and Tommy Atkins) to discover that "Budd" was not a "great Gawd." But then they did not want to, and in any case sympathy and intelligence are not precisely the most salient qualities in either soldiers or missionaries. But nothing is more absurd than to compare men like Sir W. Jones, Sir R. Burton, Von Hammer-Purgstall, Sir E. Arnold, Prof. Max Muller, Me, Prof. Rhys Davids, Lane, and the rest of our illustrious Orientalists to the poor {201B} and ignorant Hindus whose letters occasionally delight the readers of the "Sporting Times," such letters being usually written by public scribes for a few pice in the native bazaar. As to "Babus" (Babu, I may mention, is the equivalent to our "Mister," and not the name of a savage tribe), Mr. Chesterton, from his Brixton Brahmaloaka, may look forth and see that the "Babu" cannot understand Western ideas; but a distinguished civil servant in the Madras Presidency, second wrangler in a very good year, assured me that he had met a native whose mathematical knowledge was superior to that of the average senior wrangler, and that he had met several others who approached that standard. His specific attack on Madame Blavatsky is equally unjust, as many natives, not theosophists, have spoken to me of her in the highest terms. "Honest Hindus" cannot be expected to think as Mr. Chrsterton deems likely, as he is unfortunately himself a Western, and in the same quagmire of misapprehension as Prof. Max. Muller and the rest. Madame Blavatsky's work was to remind the Hindus of the excellence of their own shastras,<> to show that some Westerns held identical ideas, and thus to countermine the dishonest representations of the missionaries. I am

sufficiently well known as a bitter opponent of "Theosophy" to risk nothing in making these remarks.

I trust that the sense of public duty which inspires these strictures will not be taken as incompatible with the gratitude I owe to him for his exceedingly sympathetic and dispassionate review of my "Soul of Osiris."

I would counsel him, however, to leave alone the Brixton Chapel, and to "work up from his appreciation of the 'Soul of Osiris' to that loftier and wider work of the human imagination, the appreciation of the 'Sporting Times!'"

Mr. Chesterton thinks it funny that I should call upon "Shu." Has he forgotten that the Christian God may be most suitably invoked by the name "Yah"? I should be sorry if God were to mistake his religious enthusiasms for the derisive ribaldry of the London "gamin." Similar remarks apply to "El" and other Hebrai-Christian deities.

This note is hardly intelligible without the review referred to. I therefore reprint the {202A} portion thereof which is germane to my matter from the "Daily News," June 18, 1901: --

To the side of a mind concerned with idle merriment ("sic!") there is certainly something a little funny in Mr. Crowley's passionate devotion to deities who bear such names as Mout and Nuit, and Ra and Shu, and Hormakhou. They do not seem to the English mind to lend themselves to pious exhilaration. Mr. Crowley says in the same poem:

The burden is too hard to bear,
I took too adamant a cross;
This sackcloth rends my soul to wear,
My self-denial is as dross.
O, Shu, that holdest up the sky,
Hold up thy servant, lest he die!

We have all possible respect for Mr. Crowley's religious symbols, and we do not object to his calling upon Shu at any hour of the night. Only it would be unreasonable of him to complain if his religious exercises were generally mistaken for an effort to drive away cats.

Moreover, the poets of Mr. Crowley's school have, among all their merits, some genuine intellectual dangers from this tendency to import religious, this free trade in gods. That all creeds are significant and all gods divine we

willingly agree. But this is rather a reason for being content with our own than for attempting to steal other people's. The affectation in many modern mystics of adopting an Oriental civilisation and mode of thought must cause much harmless merriment among the actual Orientals. The notion that a turban and a few vows will make an Englishman a Hindu is quite on a par with the idea that a black hat and an Oxford degree will make a Hindu an Englishman. We wonder whether our Buddhistic philosophers have ever read a florid letter in Baboo English. We suspect that the said type of document is in reality exceedingly like the philosophic essays written by Englishmen about the splendour of Eastern thought. Sometimes European mystics deserve something worse than mere laughter at the hands ("sic!") of Orientals. If ever was one person whom honest Hindus would have been justified in tearing to pieces it was Madame Blavatsky.

That our world-worn men of art should believe for a moment that moral salvation is possible and supremely important is an unmixed benefit. But to believe for a moment that it is to be found by going to particular places or reading particular books or joining particular societies is to make for the thousandth time the mistake that is at once materialism and superstition. If Mr. Crowley and the new mystics think for one moment that an Egyptian desert is more mystic than an English meadow, that a palm tree is more poetic than a Sussex beech, that a broken temple of Osiris is more supernatural than a Baptist chapel in Brixton, then they {202B} are sectarians, and only sectarians of no more value to humanity than those who think that the English soil is the only soil worth defending, and the Baptist chapel the only chapel worthy of worship ("sic"). But Mr. Crowley is a strong and genuine poet, and we have little doubt that he will work up from his appreciation of the Temple of Osiris to that loftier and wider work of the human imagination, the appreciation of the Brixton chapel.

G. K. CHESTERTON

778, 797. "The rest of life, for self-control,"

"For liberation of the soul." {#81}

Who said Rats? Thanks for your advice, Tony Veller, but it came in vain. As the ex-monk<> (that shook the bookstall) wrote in confidence to the publisher:

"Existence is mis'ry

I' th' month Tisri {203B upper column ends}

At th' fu' o' th' moon

I were shot wi' a goon.
[Goon is no Scots,
But Greek, Meester Watts.]
We'ra awa' tae Burma,
Whaur th' groond be firmer
Tae speer th' Mekong.
Chin Chin! Sae long.
[Long sald be lang:
She'll no care a whang.]

Ye're Rautional babe,
Aundra McAbe."

Note the curious confusion of personality. This shows Absence of Ego, in Pali Anatta, and will seem to my poor spiritually-minded friends an excuse for a course of action they do not understand, and whose nature is beyond them.
782. "Christ ascends." {#82} -- And I tell you frankly that if he does not come back by the time I have finished reading these proofs, I shall give him up.
783. "Bell." {#83} -- The folios have "bun." {203B upper column breaks out to full page for one line.}

NOTES TO PENTECOST
{Columns resume}

22. "With sacred thirst." {#1} -- "He, soul-hydroptic with a sacred thirst." A Grammarian's Funeral.
23. "Levi." {#2} -- Ceremonial magic is not quite so silly as it sounds. Witness the following masterly elucidation of its inner quintessence: --

THE INITIATED INTERPRETATION
OF CEREMONIAL MAGIC.<<1>>

<<1. This essay forms the introduction to an edition of the "Goetia" of King Solomon.>>

It is loftily amusing to the student of magical literature who is not quite a fool -- and rare is such a combination! -- to note the criticism directed by the Philistine against the citadel of his science. Truly, since our childhood has ingrained into us not only literal belief in the Bible, but also substantial belief in Alf Laylah wa Laylah, <<"A Thousand and One Nights, commonly called "Arabian Nights.">> and only adolescence can cure us, we are only too liable, in the rush and energy of dawning manhood, to overturn roughly and rashly both these classics, to regard them both on the same level, as

interesting documents from the standpoint of folk-lore and anthropology, and as nothing more.

Even when we learn that the Bible, by a {203A} profound and minute study of the text, may be forced to yield up Qabalistic arcana of cosmic scope and importance, we are too often slow to apply a similar restorative to the companion volume, even if we are the lucky holders of Burton's veritable edition.

To me, then, it remains to raise the Alf Laylah wa Laylah into its proper place once more.

I am not concerned to deny the objective reality of all "magical" phenomena; if they are illusions, they are at least as real as many unquestioned facts of daily life; and, if we follow Herbert Spencer, they are at least evidence of "some" cause.<>

Now, this fact is our base. What is the cause of my illusion of seeing a spirit in the triangle of Art?

Every smatterer, ever expert in psychology, will answer: "That cause lies in your brain."

English children are taught ("pace" the Education Act) that the Universe lies in infinite Space; Hindu children, in the Akasa, which is the same thing.

Those Europeans who go a little deeper learn from Fichte, that the phenomenal Universe is the creation of the Ego; Hindus, or Europeans studying under Hindu Gurus, are {203B} told, that by Akasa is meant the Chitakasa. The Chitakasa is situated in the "Third Eye," "i.e.," in the brain. By assuming higher dimensions of space, we can assimilate this fact to Realism; but we have no need to take so much trouble.

This being true for the ordinary Universe, that all sense-impressions are dependent on changes in the brain,<> we must include illusions, which are after all sense-impressions as much as "realities" are, in the class of "phenomena dependent on brain-changes."

Magical phenomena, however, come under a special sub-class, since they are willed, and their cause is the series of "real" phenomena called the operations of ceremonial Magic.

These consist of

(1) Sight.

The circle, square, triangle, vessels, lamps, robes, implements, etc.

(2) Sound.

The invocations.

(3) Smell.

The perfumes.

(4) Taste.

The Sacraments.

(5) Touch.

As under (1).

(6) Mind.

The combination of all these and reflection on their significance.

These unusual impressions (1-5) produce unusual brain-changes; hence their summary (6) is of unusual kind. Its projection back into the apparently phenomenal world is therefore unusual.

Herein then consists the reality of the operations and effects of ceremonial magic,< WEH NOTE: In the original, the Hebrew word for this note was

misspelled with a Dalet in place of the Resh.>> and I conceive that the apology is ample, so far as the "effects" refer only to those phenomena which appear to the magician himself, the appearance of the spirit, his conversation, possible shocks from imprudence, and so on, even to ecstasy on the one hand, and death or madness on the other.

But can any of the effects described in this our book Goetia be obtained, and if so, can you give a rational explanation of the circumstances? Say you so? I can, and will.

The spirits of the Goetia are portions of the human brain.

Their seals therefore represent (Mr. Spencer's {204A} projected cube) methods of stimulating or regulating those particular spots (through the eye).

The names of God are vibrations calculated to establish:

("a") General control of the brain. (Establishment of functions relative to the subtle world.)

("b") Control over the brain in detail. (Rank or type of the Spirit.)

("c") Control of one special portion. (Name of the Spirit.)

The perfumes aid this through smell. Usually the perfume will only tend to control a large area; but there is an attribution of perfumes to letters of the alphabet enabling one, by a Qabalistic formula, to spell out the Spirit's name.

I need not enter into more particular discussion of these points; the intelligent reader can easily fill in what is lacking.

If, then, I say, with Solomon:

"The Spirit Cimieries teaches logic," what I mean is:

"Those portions of my brain which subserve the logical faculty may be stimulated and developed by following out the processes called 'The invocation of Cimieries.'"

And this is a purely materialistic rational statement; it is independent of any objective hierarchy at all. Philosophy has nothing to say; and Science can only suspend judgment, pending a proper and methodical investigation of the facts alleged.

Unfortunately, we cannot stop there. Solomon promises us that we can (1)

obtain information; (2) destroy our enemies; (3) understand the voices of nature; (4) obtain treasure; (5) heal diseases, etc. I have taken these five powers at random; considerations of space forbid me to explain all.

(1) Brings up facts from sub-consciousness.

(2) Here we come to an interesting fact. It is curious to note the contrast between the noble means and the apparently vile ends of magical rituals. The latter are disguises for sublime truths. "To destroy our enemies" is to realise the illusion of duality, to excite compassion.

(Ah! Mr. Waite, <> the world of Magic is a mirror, wherein who sees muck is muck.)

(3) A careful naturalist will understand much from the voices of the animals he has studied long. Even a child knows the difference of a cat's miauling and purring. The faculty may be greatly developed.

(4) Business capacity may be stimulated.

(5) Abnormal states of the body may be {204B} corrected, and the involved tissues brought back to tone, in obedience to currents started from the brain.

So for all other phenomena. There is no effect which is truly and necessarily miraculous.

Our Ceremonial Magic fines down, then, to a series of minute, though of course empirical, physiological experiments, and whoso will carry them through intelligently need not fear the result.

I have all the health, and treasure, and logic I need; I have no time to waste. "There is a lion in the way." For me these practices are useless; but for the benefit of others less fortunate I give them to the world, together with this explanation of, and apology for, them.

I trust that the explanation will enable many students who have hitherto, by a puerile objectivity in their view of the question, obtained no results, to succeed; that the apology may impress upon our scornful men of science that the study of the bacillus should give place to that of the baculum, the little to the great -- how great one only realises when one identifies the wand with the Mahalingam, <> up which Brahma flew at the rate of 84,000 yojanas a second for 84,000 mahakalpas, down which Visnu flew at the rate of 84,000 crores of yojanas a second for 84,000 crores of mahakalpas -- yet neither reached an end.

But I reach an end.

23. "The criptic Coptic." {#3} -- Vide the Papyrus of Bruce. <>

24. "ANET' AER-k, etc." {#4}, -- Invocation of Ra. From the Papyrus of Harris.

26. "MacGregor." {#5} -- The Mage.

29. "Abramelin." {#6} -- The Mage.

32. "Ancient rituals." {#7} -- From the Papyrus of MRS. Harris. <>

33. "Golden Dawn." {#8} -- These rituals were later annexed by Madame

Horos, <<"Vide" the daily papers of June-July 1901.>> that superior Swami. The earnest seeker is liable to some pretty severe shocks. To see one's "Obligation" printed in the "Daily Mail!!!" Luckily, I have no nerves.

49. {Two words in Devanagari type with an end of sentence mark in the same} ... etc."{#9} -- "Thou, as I, art God ('for this is the esoteric meaning of the common Hindu salutation'). A long road and a heavy price! To know is always a difficult work ... Hullo! Bravo! Thy name (I have seen) is written in the stars. Come with me, pupil! I will give thee medicine for the mind." {205A}

Cf. Macbeth: "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?"

58. {One word and end sentence in Devanagari type} "...."{#10} -- Enough.

60. {One word and end sentence in Devanagari type} "...."{#11} -- Why?

60. {Two words and end sentence in Devanagari type} "...."{#12} -- What will be?

61 "Strange and painful attitude."{#13} -- Siddhasana.

62. "He was very rude."{#14} -- The following is a sample: --

"O Devatas! behold this yogi! O Chela! Accursed abode of Tamas art thou! Eater of Beef, guzzling as an Heard of Swine! Sleeper of a thousand sleeps, as an Harlot heavy with Wine! Void of Will! Sensualist! Enraged Sheep! Blasphemer of the Names of Shiva and of Devi! Christian in disguise! Thou shalt be reborn in the lowest Avitchi! Fast! Walk! Wake! these are the keys of the Kingdom! Peace by with thy Beard! Aum!"

This sort of talk did me good: I hope it may do as much for you.

63. "With eyes well fixed on my proboscis."{#15} -- See Bhagavad-Gita, Atmasamyog.

67. "Brahma-charya."{#16} -- Right conduct, and in particular, chastity in the highest sense.

72. "Baccy."{#17} -- A poisonous plant used by nicotomaniacs in their orgies and debauches. "The filthy tobacco habit," says "Elijah the Restorer" of Zion, late of Sydney and Chicago. That colossal genius-donkey, Shaw, is another of them. But see Calverley.

78. "His hat."{#18} -- It may be objected that Western, but never Eastern, magicians turn their headgear into a cornucopia or Pandora's box. But I must submit that the Hat Question is still "sub judice." Here's a health to Lord Ronald Gower!

86. "Swinburne."{#19} --

"But this thing is God,

To be man with thy might

To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit, and live out thy life as the light." -- "Hertha."

104. "My big beauty"{#20} -- Pink on Spot; Player, Green, in Hand. But I have "starred" since I went down in "that" pocket.

120. "My Balti coolies."{#21} -- See my "The Higher the Fewer." <