

THE ACADEMY
circa 1899

Review of *The Tale of Archais*

This is not a very pretty story. The passions and adventures of Charicles and Archais are in a sickly, sensuous vein, which does not strike us as particularly Hellenic; or if Hellenic, it is Hellenic of the decadence. And when Zeus and Aphrodite intervene, it is in a fashion characteristic enough of their disreputable duties, but barely edifying. However, the "Gentleman of Cambridge," though he has not good taste, has a certain command of facile rhythm. This is a fair example:

Archais.

Cold is the kiss of the stars to the sea,
The kiss of the earth to the orient grey
That heralds the day;
Warmer the kiss of a love that is free
As the wind of the sea,
Quick and resurgent and splendid.

Charicles.

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

But the best thing in the book is the last quatrain of its epilogue:

Now a stream to ford and a stile to clamber;
Last the inn, a book, and a quiet corner . . .
Fresh as Spring, there kisses me on the forehead
Sleep, like a sister.