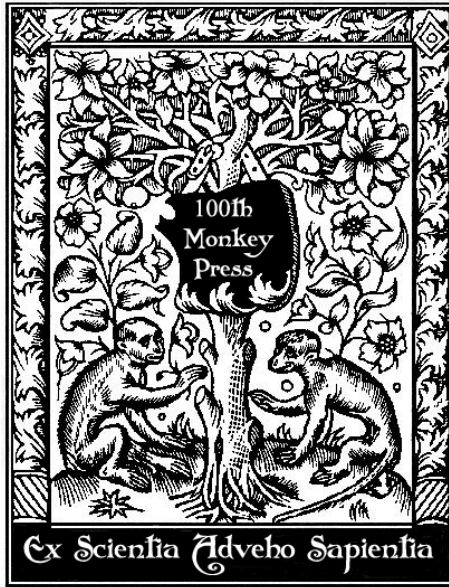


WHY JESUS WEPT

100th Monkey Press
Austin, Texas
2008



“When a critical mass is achieved within a species, the behavior is instantaneously transferred to and exhibited by all members of the species”

WHY
JESUS WEPT

A STUDY OF SOCIETY
AND OF THE GRACE OF GOD

BY
ALEISTER CROWLEY

PRIVATELY PRINTED

1904

PERSONS STUDIED.

THE MARQUIS OF GLENSTRAE, K.G.

TYSON, *a farmer.*

SIR PERCIVAL DE PERCIVALE, *Bart., K.C.B.*

SIR PERCY DE PERCIVALE, *his son.*

JOHN CARRUTHERS, *his friend and steward of his house,*

GREUMOCH, *A Highland gillie.*

ARNOLD, }
RITSON, } *household servants.*

SIR HERPES ZOSTER, M.D., *A celebrated physician.*

SIR GRABSON JOBBS, Q.C., *Solicitor-General.*

MR. G. K. CHESTERTON.

LORD RONALD GOWER, *as Chorus.*

A Horny-Handed Brother (Plymouth).

A Conscientious Chemist.

A Theatre-Goer.

Large but unseen body of retainers.

MAUD, MARCHIONESS OF GLENSTRAE.

ANGELA, LADY BAIRD.

HORTENSE, *her maid.*

MOLLY TYSON, *daughter of Tyson.*

Aged (Plymouth) Sisters, &c., &c.

The action of the play occupies three years.

At 30, Clarendon Square, Leamington, on October 12, 1875 A.D. the wife of Edward Crowley had a son.

The Times

JESUS WEPT
John 11.35

DEDICATIO MINIMA.

My dear Christ,

A person, purporting to be a friend and disciple of yours, and calling himself John, reports you to have wept. His testimony is now considered by the best authorities to be of a very doubtful order. But if you did weep, this (vide infra) is why. Of if not, surely it would have made you weep, had it met your eye. Excuse the rhyme!

You ask me (on dit) to believe you. I shall be willing to do so—merely as a gentleman—till you betray the trust; but at present nobody worthy of serious consideration can give me any clear notion of what you actually assert. I labour under no such disadvantages. So have no diffidence in asking you to believe me.

Yours affectionately,

ALEISTER CROWLEY.

DEDICATIO MINOR.

My dear Lady S—

I quite agree with your expressed opinion that no true gentleman would (with or without reason) compare any portion of your ladyship's anatomy to a piece of wet chamois leather; the best I can do to repair his rudeness is to acknowledge the notable part your ladyship played in the conception of this masterpiece by the insertion of as much of your name as my lawyers will permit me.

I am your ladyship's most humble and obedient servant,

ALEISTER CROWLEY.

DEDICATIO MAJOR.

My Friends,

To you, Eastern of the Easterns, who have respectively given up all to find Truth; you, Jinawaravansa, who esteemed the Yellow Robe more than your Princedom; you, Achiha, by sticking manfully to your Work in the World, yet no more allowing it to touch your Purpose than waters may wet the lotus leaf (to take the oldest and best simile of your oldest and best poets), must I dedicate this strange drama; for, like you, I would abandon all; like you, I see clearly what is of value; or, if not, at least what is worthless; already something! Thus do I wish you and myself the three great boons Sila, Samadhi, and Salam.

DEDICATIO MAXIMA.

To my unborn child,

*Who may learn by the study of this drama to
choose the evil and avoid the good—i.e. as judged
by Western, or 'Christian' standards.*

DEDICATIO EXTRAORDINARIA.

Dear Mr. Chesterton,

Alone among the puerile apologists of your detestable religion you hold a reasonably mystic head above the tides of criticism. You are the last champion of God; with you I choose to measure myself. Others I can despise; you are a force to be reckoned with, as Browning your intellectual father was before you.

Whether we are indeed friends or enemies it is perhaps hard to say: it has sometimes seemed to me that human freedom and happiness are our common goal, but that you found your muddied oafs in Gods, ministers, passive resisters, and all the religious team—the “Brixton Bahinchuts,” we might call them; while I, at once a higher mystic and a colder sceptic, found my Messiah in Charles Watts, and the Devil and all his angels. While *שהו* and *חישמ* alike add to 358, indeed, it is no odds: did you once see this you were not far off from the Heart of the Qabalah.

The occasion of this letter is the insertion of a scene equivalent to an “appreciation of the Brixton Chapel” in my masterpiece “Why Jesus Wept.” You asked me for it; I promised it; and I hope you will like it. Can I do more than make your Brixton my *deus ex machina*? You see, when I wrote “The Soul of Osiris,” Europe was my utmost in travel. To-day, what country of the globe has not shuddered with the joy of my presence? The virgin snows of Chogo Ri, the gloomy jungles of Burma, filled with savage buffaloes and murderous Chins; the peace of Wai-

kiki, the breeding hopeful putrefaction of America, the lonely volcanoes of Mexico, the everlasting furnace sands of Egypt—all these have known me. Travel thou thus far, thou also! Somewhat shall thou learn! But otherwise; gird on thine armour for thy Christ, O champion of the dying faith in man dead!

Arm! arm, and out; for the young warrior of a new religion is upon thee; and his number is the number of a man.

יהלוערקרהטטיהלא

WHY JESUS WEPT

In vain I sit by Kandy Lake.
The broad verandah slides to mist.
No tropic rapture strikes awake
The grim soul's candour to insist
The pen reluctant. Beauty's task
Is but to praise the peace of earth ;
If Horror's contrast that should ask,
Off from this Paradise of mirth!
Let Kandy Lake, the white soul, mirror
The generalised concept, limn clear
England, a memory clean of error,
A royal reason to be here.
Therefore no reminiscence stirs
My heart of when I lived in Kandy.
Europe's the focus now! that blurs
The picture of my Buddhist dandy,
Allan, who broke his wand of flame,
Discharged his faithful poltergeist,
Gave up attempts to say The Name,
Ananda Maitriya became,
By yellow robes allured, enticed ;
Leaving me all alone to shame
The cunning missionary game ;
And, by bad critics topped and sliced,
Put the ky-bosh on Jesus Christ.

I sing a tale of modern life
(Suited for reading to my wife)
Of how Sir Percy Percivale
Grew from a boy into a man ;
Well ware of every metric plan
A bard may dream, a rhymester scrawl,

Avoiding with deliberate "Damn!"
 (Ut supra) In Memoriam;
 For such suggestion would suffice
 To turn your blood to smoke or ice,
 Dismissing with a hearty curse
 Eunuch psychology, pimp verse.
 Moreover, lest my metre move
 From year to year in one dull groove,
 Invention, hear me! Strange device
 Hatch from this egg a cocatrice
 Of novel style, that you who read
 The Sword of Song—(your poor, poor head!)
 Shall stand amazed (at the new note
 Flung faultless from this trembling throat)
 That Crowley, ever versatile
 And lord of many a new bad style
 Should still in's gun have one more cartridge,
 And who Ixtaccihuatl's smart ridge
 Achieved should still be full of mettle
 To go up Popocatapetl.

As song then chills or aches or burns,
 The metre shall slew round by turns.
 The gross and bestial demand prose.
 (Glance at the page, lass, stop your nose,
 And turn to where short lines proclaim
 That purity has won the game!)
 But stow your prudery, wives and mothers,
 You know as much muck as—those others!
 Your modest homes are dull; you need me!
 Don't let your husbands know; but—read me!

SCENE I.

The Poet inducts his matter.

I draw no picture of the Fates
 (Recitativo—rhyming 8s)
 Presiding over birth and so on.
 I leave the Gods alone, and go on.
 Sir Percival de Percivale
 Sat in his vast baronial hall
 (All unsuspecting of the weird ;
 “One day a person with a beard
 Shall write of thee, and write a lot
 Too like the late Sir Walter Scott.”)
 Sir Percivale de Percivale
 (Begin again!) was over all
 The pangs of death foreseen ; his eye
 Sought the high rafter vacantly.
 A week, and he would see no more !
 His lady long had gone—O Lor’!
 I hear “St. Agnes’ Eve” suggest
 To this 8’s better a far best ;
 Spenserian solemnity
 Fits this part of my minstrelsy.

Now is the breath of winter in the hall.
 The logs die out—the knight would be alone !
 The brave Sir Percival de Percivale
 Sits like an image hewn out of stone.
 Ay! he must die. The doctors all are gone,
 And he must follow to the dusk abode,
 The solemn place inscrutable, unknown,
 Meeting no mortal on that crowded road ;
 All swift in the one course, ions to the kathode.

Sir Percival de Percivale was brave.
 There doth he sit and little cheer doth get.
 He doth not moan or laugh aloud or rave!
 The dogs of hell are not upon him yet.
 He was the bravest soul man ever met
 In court or camp or solitude—then why
 Stands his pale forehead in an icy sweat?
 He mutters in his beard this rune awry:
There lives no soul undrugged that feareth not to die.

Lo! were it otherwise, mere banishment,
 I deem he had feared more! He had an heir.
 This was a boy of strength with ardour blent,
 High hope embowered in a body fair.
 Him had he watched with eager eye, aware
 Of misery occult in youth, awake
 At the first touch of the diviner air
 Of manhood, that could bane and blessing make,
The Lord of Life and Death, the secret of the Snake.

The snake of Egypt hath a body twin;
 It hath bright wings wherewith it well can fly;
 It is of virtue and of bitter sin;
 It beareth strength and beauty in its eye;
 Beneath its tongue are hate and Misery;
 Love in its coils is hidden, and its nature
 Is double everyway; dost wonder why
 The poet worships every scaled feature,
And holds him lordliest yet of every kingly creature?

Sir Percival nor moved nor spoke; awhile
 There is black silence in the ancient hall.
 Then cometh subtly with well-trained smile
 The courteous eld, the aged seneschal.
 On bended knee "Sir Percy!" he doth call
 To the young boy, and voweth service true.
 Whereat he started, spurning at the thrall;
 But then the orphan truth he inward knew,
 And on the iron ground his sobbing body threw.

It was a weary while before they raised him
 Boy as he was, none dare disturb his grief.
 And for his grief was strong, they loved and praised him
 For son's devotion to their dear dead chief.
 Long, long he wept, nor brought with tears relief.
 He knew the loss, the old head wise and grey
 Well to assoil him of his spirit's grief,
 The twilight dangers of a boy's dim way,
 His dragons to confront, his minotaurs to slay.

Yet, when he knew himself the baronet,
 He took good order for the house, and bore
 Him as beseemed the master ; none may fret
 All are as well bestowed as aye before.
 His father's eighty was with him fourscore.
 His father's old advisers well he groups
 Into a closer company ; their lore
 He ardently acquires—he loops no loops,
 But—Bacon grapples them to's soul, with steely hoops !

You, lass, may see here for this Boy's companions
 Virtue and Peace of Mind, Prudence, Respect,
 Throwing new roots down like a clump of banyans,
 Of Early Training Well the just Effect !
 I would applaud thee, camel gracious-necked !
 Confirm thee in thy reading of my task,
 Were it not foreign to the fact. Select
 Another favour!—this too much to ask.
 The boy's exemplar deeds were but an iron mask.

“Ay! for deception!” Mrs. Sally G——d,
 The gawk and dowdy with the long grey teeth,
 Jumps to conclusion, instant, out of hand :
 “There is some nasty secret underneath !”
 None nastier than thy name ! This verse, its sheath,
 Thou poisonous bitch, is rotten. Fact, atone !
 Such magic liquors in his veins there seethe
 As, would he master, need strong order known
 In life's routine, ere he may dare to be alone.

So there alone he was, and like a comet,
Leaps on the utmost ridges of the hills.
Then, like a dog returning to his vomit,
Broods in the hall on all creation's ills!
An idle volume with mere bosh he fills;
He dreams and dozes, toils and flies afar,
Apace—the body by a thousand wills
Of fire corss-twisted, bruised, is thrust, a spar,
Wreckage of some wild sea, to seas without a star.

Listen, O lady, listen, reverend Abbot,
Lord of the Monastery, Fort Augustus!
Hear an awakening spirit's a, b, ab! but
Let not thy mediaeval logic thrust us
Into contempt; nor, lady, can we trust us
Wholly to thy most pardonable failing,
Sentiment; one will rot, the other rust us.
Let us just listen to the spirit ailing:—
'is like a God in bliss, or like a damned soul wailing!

SCENE II.

SIR PERCY PERCIVALE (*on a mountain summit*).

No higher? No higher?
All hell is my portion.
My mouth is as fire;
My thought an abortion.
This is the summit?
Attained is the height.
Down like a plummet
To blackness and night
Hope goes. Not here,
Not here is Desire,
The ease from fear,
The ice from fire.
Not here—O God!
I would I were dead
Under the sod!
My brain is as lead.
My thoughts are as smoke.
My heart is a fire;
I know not what fuel
Is feeding its fury!
In vain I invoke
The Lord of Desire!
He is evil and cruel.
The spells of Jewry
Are poured in his ear
In vain: he may hear not.
O would I were dumb!
For the pestilent fever
That bites my blood
Forces like fear

These babblings : I near not
The secret, nor come
To my purpose for ever.
A turbulent flood
Whispers and yells,
Alight in my breast.
God! for the spells
That unseal men—a rest!
No higher? I have climbed
This pinnacled steep.
It mocks me, this heaven
Of thine, Adonai!
Rather be limed
In the dusk, in the deep,
Seven times seven
Thy hells, O Jehovah!
I tune the great Name
To a million vowels :—
It escapes me, the flame!
But deep in my bowels
Growls the deep lust,
The bitter distrust,
The icy fear,
The cruel thought!
O! I am here—
And here is nought.
I must rave on.
I hate the sun.
Anon! Anon!
Let us both begone,
Thou fiend that pourest
One by one
These evil words
In my ear, in my heart!
Here on the summit
The air is too thin.
Wild as the winds
Let me ride! Let me start
Over the plains ;

For here my brain's
Numb, it is dumb, it
Is torn by this passion.
Down! Eagle-fashion
Drive to the level!
Teeth! you may gnash on!
My body's anguish
Is help to my soul.
Hail to the revel!
The dance of the devil,
The rhythms that languish,
The rhymes that roll!
Down like the swine
Of the gross Gadarene
In a maddening march
From the snow to the rock,
From the rock to the pine,
From the pine to the larch,
From the tree to the green!

[He leaps down, then pauses.]

O Devil! to mock
With echo the roar
Of a young boy's spirit!
And yet (as before)
I know I inherit
The wit of the mage,
The blood of the king,
The age of the sage!
Ah! all these sting
Through me—this rage
Is the strength of my blood,
The heat of my body,
The birth of my wit.
To hell with the flood
Of words! Were I God, he
Had made me as fit
For all things as now,
But added a brow
Cool—O how cool!

Fool! Fool! Fool!

*[With a terrible laugh he springs out of
sight down the crags.]*

SCENE III.

SIR PERCY PERCIVALE (*in the Hall*).

O the gloom of these distasteful tomes!
 The horror of the secrets here discovered!
 Wake, ye salamandrines; sleep, ye gnomes!
 Were those the sylphs that round me hovered
 On the mountain, and destroyed my peace?
 O the misery of this world; the fear
 And folly that is unattained desire!
 I would be master: I, the lord of Greece:
 I the bright Deva of the golden sphere;
 I the swift spirit of the primal fire:—
 All these I am, not will be. O blind ape!
 All these are shapeless; thou art but a shape,
 A blind, bad-blooded bat! Ugh! Ugh! The snake
 Wriggling to death amid his burning brake
 Is wiser, holier, lordlier. Open, page
 Of the old Rabbi! tell me of the mage;
 Of him who would; of him who dared and did;
 Of him who reared and failed; of him who fell;
 One peering lightwards through a coffin-lid,
 One aching heavenwards—and achieving hell!
 O let me do and die as they! The wand,
 The lamp, the sword, come eager to my hand;—
 Or, if I wander now upon the moor,
 An old red-hatted witch will come, for sure,
 And teach me how the dragon deeds are done
 Or truck my spirit to the Evil One;
 Or else,—I wot not what. I am drunk with will,
 Will toward some destiny most high, most holy!
 Some of those glories sung with awful skill
 By the loud brabble of the monster Crowley,

That poet of the muck-heap! Oh, enough!
 The wind is harsh and vital on the hills.
 Forth let me fare! I am other than the stuff
 His dreams are made of! Aye! I shall endure!
 I am destined Lord of many magic wills.
 Another Rosencreutz another order
 Founds—to a better end than his, be sure!
 Away! away, my lad! and o'er the border
 I shall get myself a buxom bride,
 And ride—ride—ride! [*He rises.*
 Ride to the blacksmith at Gretna Green,
 Kiss a fair lady and find her a queen!
 O a Queen, for certain! It is I that ride,
 Ride in my youth and pride.
 With a long sword girt to my waist,
 And a strawberry mare sweet-paced,
 And a long night with no moon, no star!
 I will plunder the traveller from afar;—
 Aye! and find him an ancient sage,
 Learn all his wisdom, marry his daughter,
 Become a king and a mage,
 Lord of Fire, Earth, Air, and Water!
 Ho! my horse, lads! Away! To the moor!
 Ho! there's a fox i' the hole, that's sure.
[*Flings swaggering out of the room.*

SCENE IV.

ANGELA, LADY BAIRD (*regarding herself in a mirror*).

I thank you, M. Davenport! This smile
 Is worth a husband. Here, one touch of pink
 Completes a perfect picture—Are these eyes
 Dark eno' to look love or sin, and large
 (O Atropine!) to beam forth innocence!
 Innocence, a grim jest for sixty years!
 Nay, sixty-three; I lie not to myself;
 Else one sins lying; this is virtue mixed,
 A bubbling draught that soon lies still and flat;
 While my great lust runs deep and dark, nor changes
 For all that time can do. What of this boy?
 I knew his father; the man feared me well
 For all his open laughter; would he were
 Alive! I dream one torture writhed about
 His heart he'll miss in hell. I hated him.
 This boy of his I saw but yesterday
 Ride barehead by me like a madman would,
 Is strong and well-set—aye! desirable.
 I would be better of his virgin lips:—

[*She puts her lips against the mirror*

(Nay, you are cold! Like a dead man, perhaps!)
 I would get gladness of the royal force
 Of armed insistence against my restraint.
 What is worth while, though, to a woman found
 Fragrant and fearful to a host of men
 Even yet? they throng me, hunt me! Why should I
 Do this unutterable wickedness?
 Because that Moina Marjoribanks grins and boasts
 She will achieve him? Angela, not so!
 For its own sweet, most damnable sake, say yes!

Look to those cheeks, redress the red-gold hair,
 Awake the giant wit, the master sin
 That is, for an apple's sake, Lord of us all :
 These shall despoil her ; these shall ruin him.
 Yes, I shall clutch him to these sagging breasts
 Stained, bruised,—enough!—and take his life in mine—
 Ugh! pleasure of Hell! Sir Percy Percivale,
 Here is a strumpet. Ha! have you a sword ?
 Enough. I am dressed. I am lovely, have communed
 With my dark heart : I see my way to it :—
 Oh joy! joy! joy!—Hortense, these candles out!

[The maid blows out the mirror candles.]

I will go down. Prepare my scented paper,
 My rosy wax against my coming here—
 When, girl? I' th' morn, i' th' morn! When else? I'd write.

*[She goes out, with a set smile on her face, yet a
 gleam of real laughter beneath it.]*

SCENE V.

To CARRUTHERS, in the Office of SIR PERCY'S Ancestral Hall, enter GREUMOCH.

GREUMOCH.

Ay, sir. The laddie's in the thick o't! Weel!
She'll be off tae th' muir, a'm thinking, sin' the dee.

CARRUTHERS.

He goes to solitude?

GREUMOCH.

Weel, weel, sir, na!
She wadna say the laddie wad gang yon.

CARRUTHERS (*smiling*).

He is ever alone?

GREUMOCH.

Oo ay, sir, by his lanes.

CARRUTHERS.

Go now, and tell me ever of his doings.

[*Exit* GREUMOCH.]

The hour is nigh, but when that hour may strike
None, not the wisest, may foretell. I fear
A moment's mischief may destroy these years
Of grave solicitude, their work. This boy
Thinks his grey father dead. These words
(*tapping a letter*) shall speak
Even from the tomb. These words shall be obeyed
By force of ancient habit: these give me
Supreme authority to exercise

By stealth, not overt till the hour be come
Should madness seat herself upon the lad,
And he turn serpent on his friends. But no!
There is too strong a discipline of sense,
Too cool a brain, too self-controlled a heart:—
Well, we shall see.

[Turns to his books.]

SCENE VI.

SIR PERCY PERCIVALE (*on Wastwater*).

God, I have rowed!
 My hands are one blister;
 By arms are one ache;
 But my brain is a fire,
 As erst on the fell,
 In the hall; let me dive
 To the under-abode,
 Where the sweet-voiced sister
 Of the Screes shall forsake
 Her home for desire
 Of me! Say the spell!
 Down then! to drive—

[*He dives. The waters close over him. He rises*
 Misery ever!
 I dived, and the best
 Could dive no deeper.
 Did I touch bottom?
 Never, O never!
 I stand confessed
 A footler, a creeper.
 These spells—'Od rot 'em!—
 Are vain as the world,
 As all of the stars.
 This mystery's nought.
 But for cold! The lake
 Is hot as the curled
 Flames at the bars
 Of Hell; it is wrought
 Of fire: what shall slake
 This terrible thirst,

This Torment accurst ?

[*He looks into the water.*]

Yet, in my face
 As I gaze on the water
 Is something calmer.
 What if the king
 Of the Screes should see me,
 Give me for grace
 His beautiful daughter,
 Voluptuous charmer ?
 A golden ring
 Should bring her to me ;
 No marriage dreamy ;
 Identity, love !

[*He looks up,*

Stay! In the wood
 By the waterway, stands
 A delicate fairy !

[*MOLLY TYSON is discovered.*]

I'll steal from above,
 Watch her. How good !
 How sweet of her hands !
 How dainty and airy !
 How perfect, how kind !
 How bright in her thoughts !
 How subtle, refined,
 The least light of her mind !
 Let me approach !
 O fear! O sorrow !
 I fear to encroach.
 Scree-king, I borrow
 Thy frown, thy pride,
 Thy magical targe.
 To her side I glide,
 To the mystical marge
 Of this lake enchanted.
 O waters elf-haunted,
 Bear me toward her,
 A cruel marauder,

A robber of light!
 O beauty! O bright!
 How shall I sing thee?
 Nay! do not fly me!
 My bird, why wing thee?
 Be kind! O be nigh me!
 She speaks not. I'll follow!
[Leaps from boat and wades in to shore,
 The world is my bower.
 By height and by hollow
 I'll seek thee, O flower!
 I'll not turn back!

[He pursues her.

I'll go on for ever.
 The strength of a giant
 Is in my limbs—

[He reels.

My body is slack;
 My muscles sever;
 My limbs are pliant;
 My eyesight swims.
 Come to me! Come to me!
 Thee have I sought!
 Thou that wast dumb to me,
 Come—I am nought!

*[Striving ever to follow her, he faints
 and falls. The girl stops.*

MOLLY.

Dear me! The young gentleman's ill too. What a nice boy it is! I must go and help him. Why did he call to me? (*Goes back.*) I was afraid—Yes, but I must go. Something calls me. Is anything the matter, sir? (*He does not answer. She lifts his head to her lap.*) How pale he is! Poor boy! Shall I run to the Hall and get help, I wonder? (*Puts him gently down and half rises. His eyes open.*)

SIR PERCY.

Oh! I am but a coward. I am not ill, I was awake.
I let you hold me. Forgive me!

MOLLY.

Forgive you, sir? I am a poor girl of the dale.

SIR PERCY.

Your voice is like an empress—no, a nightingale. You do not speak like a daleswoman.

MOLLY.

I was at school, sir, at—

SIR PERCY.

O but I love you!
There is none above you,
Not God! I renounce Thee,
O maker! Dissolve,
Ye hopes of delusion!
Mage, I will trounce thee!
Sage, to confusion!
Problems to solve?
Here is my life!
My secret is told—
What is your name,
O fairest of women?
Bosom of gold!
Faultless your fame!
An aeon were shame
Your beauty to hymn in!
Will you be mine,
Mine and mine only!
Beauty divine,
How I was lonely!
How I was mad!
Say, are you glad,
Glad of me, happy here,
Here in my arms?

I kiss you, I kiss you!
 Say, is it bliss, you
 Spirit of holiness?
 Holy I hold you!
 Swift as a rapier
 Stabbed me your charms,
 Broken with lowliness,
 Smitten with rapture:—
 All is so mixed;
 All is a whirl;—
 (Let me recapture
 This lock; 'tis unfixed.)
 Ay, little girl,
 Bury my head
 In the scent of your hair!
 Would I were dead
 In your arms ever fair,
 Buried and folded
 For aye on your breast:—
 That were delight,
 Eternity moulded
 In form of your kiss!
 That were the rest
 I have sought for, the bliss
 I have ached to obtain:—
 Ah! it was pain!

MOLLY.

Ay! sir, but can you love me? Me, poor girl!

SIR PERCY.

Love you? Ah, Christ! I love you so! Say you love me, love me! Say so! Again! Again! Aloud! I must hear, or I shall die.

MOLLY.

I love you. Oh, you hurt me, you do indeed.

SIR PERCY.

I love you, love you. Yes, you love me! Love!
Christ! Yes, oh! I love you so, dear heart.

MOLLY.

Dear love, I love you.

SIR PERCY.

Ah, love, love, how I love you. This is the world!
Love! Love! I love you so, my darling. Oh my
white golden heart of glory!

MOLLY.

I love you, love you so.

SIR PERCY.

Ah, God! I love you! I shall faint with love. I
love you so.

[ANGELA, LADY BAIRD, *is discovered behind the
trees. She suffers the torments of hell.*

ANGELA (*While the duet continues*).

Ah! if there were a devil to buy souls,
Of if I had not sold mine! Quick bargain, God!
Hell catch the jade! Blister her fat red cheeks!
Rot her snub nose! Poison devour her guts!
Wither her fresh clean face with old grey scabs,
And venomous ulcers gnaw the baby breasts!
Vermin upon her! Infamous drab! Gr! Gr!
I would I had her home to torture her.
I would dig out those amorous eyes with gimlets.
Break those young teeth and smash that gaby grin!
I am utterly wretched! Ah, there is aye hope left!—
For see, they part!

SIR PERCY.

Ah, love, at moonrise!

MOLLY.

At my door!

SIR PERCY.

Hell belch

Its monsters one by one to stop the way!
I would be there.

ANGELA.

Christ! he shall not be there!

MOLLY.

Farewell!

SIR PERCY.

O fairest, fare thee well!

MOLLY.

Farewell!

[ANGELA *draws nearer, yet remains concealed.*]

SIR PERCY.

O but the moon is laggard!

MOLLY.

Hard it is!

SIR PERCY.

Time matters not. I am so drunk with love.

MOLLY.

One kiss, one kiss!

SIR PERCY.

A million! Ay, slack moon,
Dull moon, haste, haste!

MOLLY.

Kiss me again, again!

ANGELA.

Would I had the kissing of her with vitriol!

SIR PERCY.

Your kisses are like young rain.

ANGELA.

The slobbery kisses of virginity.
He shall soon know these calculated, keen,
Intense, important kisses,—mine! Hell's worm!

MOLLY.

Yes, do not leave me. Let us away now!
No, I must tell them, fetch my—

SIR PERCY.

No! No! No!

Nothing is necessary unto love,
Not even light. In chaos love were well.
I love you, love you so, my love, my love.

MOLLY.

How I love you! Oh, kiss me again!

SIR PERCY.

Yet you were best to go. This bites like Hell's worst
agony.

ANGELA.

Amen!

MOLLY.

God be with you!

SIR PERCY.

Till we meet again.

MOLLY.

At moonrise.

SIR PERCY.

At your door.

ANGELA.

At moonset he shall crawl away from mine.
The dog! I hate him! So much the more sure
To have him. Damn them! Are they cock and hen
To make this cackling over their affairs?
Muck! Muck!

SIR PERCY.

I love you so, dear heart, dear love.

MOLLY.

Oh yes, I love you! Percy!

SIR PERCY.

Molly! Molly!

MOLLY.

Dear boy, how I love you!

SIR PERCY.

And I you, sweetheart.

MOLLY.

Good-bye, then!

SIR PERCY.

Good-bye! Good-bye! At moonrise.

MOLLY.

At my door.

ANGELA.

Better write it down, and then you won't forget.

SIR PERCY.

One kiss for good-bye.

MOLLY.

Good-bye.

[Slowly retires, looking over her shoulder. They run back to meet each other, and embrace anew for some minutes. Eventually SIR PERCY PERCIVALE tears himself away, MOLLY disappears, and SIR PERCY goes sorrowfully back to his boat, which he now manoeuvres to the landing stage.]

ANGELA.

Now let him find it! This will puzzle him.
When Limburger replaces Patchouli,
Why—moonrise!

[SIR PERCY, radiant, reaches the landing stage, moors his boat and mounts. He sees a pink note on the wharf.]

SIR PERCY.

Ah! she has dropped this!
A cruel fool am I;
I took an honied kiss;
I revelled in true bliss;
Yet never thought to try
A keepsake to obtain
To wear my heart upon.
Now God is great and gracious;
Here's medicine for my pain.
She has left it; she has gone!
How sweet the air and spacious!
I am happy—let me see!
I guess some verse inspired
By all her soul desired,
Purity, love, well-being—ay! and me!

[He opens the note, and reads:—

“To love you, Love, is all my happiness;
To kill you with my kisses; to devour
Your whole ripe beauty in the perfect hour
That mingles us in one supreme caress—”

Why, here is love articulate, vital! I thought that only poets, not lovers, could so speak. And that poets, poor devils, speaking, could never know. "So Percy to his Angela's distress—"

Then it is not my Molly that writes this—who is this Percy?—not me, at all events, for there is no Angela that loves me. (*A sound of sobbing in the trees.*) Whom have we here? (*Advances.*) 'Fore God, the most beautiful woman in the world, except my Molly! And her scent! O she is like some intimate tropical plant, luring and deadly!—I am afraid. (*He discovers ANGELA.*) Madam, can I aid you?

ANGELA.

Leave me! Leave me! I am the wretchedest girl on the wide earth.

SIR PERCY.

The comeliest, mademoiselle.
(*Aside.*) O see this is a woman of the world.
To her with speeches fit for such then.

ANGELA.

I have seen all. Pity me! Your flattery is a sword in my heart!

SIR PERCY.

Seen?

ANGELA.

Your love—you call it so!

SIR PERCY.

Have you, then—

ANGELA.

I saw all. Ah me! Poor Angela!

SIR PERCY.

Angela is your name ?

ANGELA.

My name.

SIR PERCY.

A lovely name. No doubt your disposition runs parallel.

ANGELA.

Meets never? You are no courtier, sir!

SIR PERCY.

Do not say "sir!"

ANGELA.

What shall I say! Oh leave me! I am ashamed.

SIR PERCY (*very pale*).

Is this your writing?

ANGELA.

Oh shame! shame! shame!
Tell me you have not read it, Sir Percy!

SIR PERCY.

Some I did read—How know you my name ?

ANGELA.

I read it in my heart. O but I am ashamed to speak to you! Or would be were not that name as a brand to blot out all feeling from me for evermore.

SIR PERCY (*aside*).

How she speaks! It is indeed an angel singing.
(*Aloud.*) Indeed, I read too far.

ANGELA.

Pity me!

SIR PERCY.

Dear lady, the joy to know, and so perfectly to express such love is enough.

ANGELA.

You mock me! That girl—do you in truth love her? She is most beautiful.

SIR PERCY.

O she is my love, my dove, my star, my—Ah!—I hurt you! (*Aside.*) O beast! What is this doubt?

ANGELA (*very close to him*).

I hear another anthem in those eyes.
By God, lad, you are wonderful!

SIR PERCY.

What would you say?

ANGELA.

What would I not do? Listen, I am Angela, Lady Baird. I am rich. That wealth now for the first time yields me some pleasure.

The moon rises late, after ten o'clock: you shall come with me. We are—neighbours, are we not? You shall come to my castle, I say; there I will prepare all for you and your young bride: my chaplain shall marry you at midnight; my name and power shall shield you from all mischance.

SIR PERCY.

I am my own master.

ANGELA.

You think so? They have kept it from you, but you have a guardian: ask him if you may marry a mere country lass—and you now not yet seventeen.

SIR PERCY.

And you—how old are you?

ANGELA.

That is a rude, rude boy!

SIR PERCY.

Oh, I am so sorry, I forgot.

ANGELA.

I will tell you, though. I am all but twenty-two!

SIR PERCY.

That is young yet.

ANGELA.

Ah, in your eyes I see sadness—I breathe; I hope.

Think deeply in yourself, if you love this girl!

I am older than you, to be sure; but not so much.

May be you would find my love a better thing than you think!

Do I perspire now? Do my cheeks run down nasty wet tears? Is my love a monotonous harping on one word? Love, Percy—dare I call you Percy?

SIR PERCY.

If I may call you Angela.

ANGELA.

Love, Percy (*she lays one hand on his shoulder and looks deeply in his eyes*), is wit, and laughter, and wisdom; all of love, and in it; but love without

these is a mawkish, moonish distemper of folly—and will pass. I shall not pass, my love!—Ah! you feel my breath upon your face!

SIR PERCY.

Yes—do not!

ANGELA.

I shall do so—you dare not move away from me! I have you?

No! Ah, Percy, Percy, will you break a heart that only beats for you?

SIR PERCY.

You woo so well that I think you must have loved before.

ANGELA.

Ay! but not like this. If I have loved it was but to study love, to learn his arts; to make myself the queen I am, that I might have strength to win you—never before has my heart been touched. Now my arts fail me. I am a poor and simple girl; and my eyes are aching with the sight of you, and my lips are mad to kiss you!

SIR PERCY.

Your breath is like a mist of rose-dawn about me.

ANGELA (*aside*).

O true apothecary! Thy drugs are expensive, but well worth the money.

(*Aloud*) Nay! but I will go. You have shamed me enough. go! Go!

SIR PERCY.

Nay! I know better of a sudden. It is you that I love!

[He would kiss her. She draws away.]

ANGELA.

False, fickle wretch!

SIR PERCY.

I will! I will!

ANGELA.

No! No!

SIR PERCY.

Yes, I was a fool, an ass, a brute. A village girl!

ANGELA.

Blood will have blood, they say.

SIR PERCY.

You are my equal, Angela! You shall be mine, mine, mine!

ANGELA.

If I will not?

SIR PERCY.

You will. You have written more than this.

ANGELA.

If I must—

SIR PERCY.

You must.

ANGELA.

Ah love! (*She yields herself up to him. A long pause.*) Learn my first lesson; at these great moments of life, silence is the best. (*Aside.*) There is a more important one. Had that silly gowk but the wit to lead him—"a fin"—where were I now? Not a drain on his stores, but a—Professor Spooner, in your next lecture warn the girls to go slow; it is

dangerous as well as cruel to leave a lover standing.

SIR PERCY.

Oh I have learnt that lesson and a thousand others.

ANGELA.

You must go now. The moon—

SIR PERCY.

This love is not of the moon. To-morrow—

ANGELA.

“And to-morrow and to-morrow.” Speak not that idle word!

SIR PERCY.

What of this chaplain?

ANGELA.

What of your guardian?

SIR PERCY.

Curses of hell!

ANGELA.

Hush! hush! sweet words must come from such sweet lips.

SIR PERCY.

What shall I do?

ANGELA.

You leave your fate already in my hands? Nay, but once married, you'll be master then!

SIR PERCY.

Shame, sweetheart!

ANGELA.

You have the strength of mind to defy convention: we dine together: we—O love, how dare you look such looks as these?—At moonset ride you back, and none the wiser. This always: for did we marry, the law would have its word to say.

SIR PERCY.

But this you speak of, is it not sin? (*She looks at him.*) And what if it were?

ANGELA.

My carriage waits—yonder.

SIR PERCY.

Ah come, come, come!

ANGELA.

Dare I?

SIR PERCY.

Dare all things! I will this delight; it shall be. And in five years we can marry, or my guardian will consent before.

ANGELA.

Come!

(They go off slowly, closely entwined, kissing and whispering.)

SIR PERCY.

You are faint with passion, love. You walk heavily.

ANGELA.

Ay, love, it is to feel your strength support me! (*Aside.*) Will the doctors never catch up with the coiffeurs?

GHREUMOCH (*coming forward, as he sees them go*).

The de'il an' a! The de'il an' a! Yon grimly auld
beetch!

Meester Carothers, Gude guide thee the nicht!
Y'ere auld bones shall auche sair wi' sorrow! Weel,
weel, it's an ill warld after a'! Greumoch wad be
slow wi' sic ill news, an' she wull maun haste.
Weel, weel!

[Exit hastily.]

SCENE VII.

MOLLY, *outside TYSON'S Cottage. Moonrise.*

MOLLY TYSON.

O there is edged the waning moon
 Out of the hollow of Sty Head Pass!
 Gable is grander for the gloom.
 Lingmell is silver! Ah, the bloom
 Of the rose of night; oh, dulcet tune
 Of the dew falling on the grass!

I am the veritable Queen
 Of Night: my king is hither bound.
 A moment and he comes—oh, breast!
 Heave if thou wilt!—such stir is rest.
 He comes, ah! steals to me unseen.
 The trees are high, the shades profound.

Together over moor and lake!
 Together over scaur and fell!
 For ever let us travel so;
 To stop so sweet a flight were woe.
 Even to stop for love's own sake;
 Save my love did it—Then? well! well!

Better to rest together, hard
 Hidden in a corner of the ghyll,
 Some cavern frosted over close,
 Some gully vivid with the rose
 Of love! The frost our years retard!
 The rose—perfume our wonder-will!

But while I sing the moon is up.
 False moon! False moon! So fast to ride.
 He is not here! Sure, he is dead!
 O moon, reveal that holiest head!
 There is much sorrow in love's cup:
 Pleasure goes ever iron-eyed.

Who are these fierce and eager forms
 That face across the untrodden moor,
 The dark-browed horsemen lashing, crying,
 Urging their weary steeds? Half-dying
 The beasts bend bitter to the storm's
 Assult: they hunt? A man, be sure!

These figures touch my soul with fear.
 What of my love? These caitiffs chase him,
 May be. Who rides? I'll catch his bridle,
 Plough with his heifer, learn his riddle.

*[Enter CARRUTHERS, riding madly, crying "Sir
 Percy! Sir Percy!"]*

You, sir, what makes your honour here!
 Sir Percy? Who then dares to face him?

CARRUTHERS.

Let go my bridle, girl, I save a life.

MOLLY.

You hunt Sir Percy Percivale!

CARRUTHERS.

To save him.

MOLLY.

God save all honest men from knaves like you!
 Stay, though, you are his friend?

CARRUTHERS.

His guardian.

MOLLY.

And I his promised wife.

CARRUTHERS.

Mad girl, be off!

MOLLY.

Ay, strike me, coward!

CARRUTHERS (*after thinking a moment*).

Then, come here, behind me!

Quick, if you love him!

MOLLY.

I will see him safe.

What is this danger?

CARRUTHERS.

Danger of your sort.

[*She mounts. OLD TYSON comes out into the open.*]

TYSON.

Eh, less, wheer off noo?

MOLLY.

Father! Father!

CARRUTHERS.

Now.

[*Spurs on the horse.*]

TYSON.

What, ye'll abdooct my darter?

CARRUTHERS.

Ha! Ha! Ha!

[*Gallops off.*]

SCENE VIII.

Dawn. Outside Castle Baird. To CARRUTHERS, GREUMOCH, MOLLY, and retainers on horseback enter LADY BAIRD and SIR PERCY PERCIVALE on the battlements.

CARRUTHERS.

Be a man, Greumoch boy, be a man!

GREUMOCH.

Sir, did she'll no be thinking ye were greeting yersel', mon, she'll could find it in her heert to whang ye, whateffer.

ANGELA.

You are early hunting, gentlemen. Come in!
My steward shall serve somewhat.

[Sees MOLLY.

Ha! Ha! Ha!

You bring a lady, then, Carruthers!

CARRUTHERS.

Madam!

Give me that boy!

ANGELA.

You fool, you are too late!

This is a man.

CARRUTHERS.

I warn you, Lady Baird.

The laws calls this abduction.

ANGELA.

Pish! the law!
 Go, my dear (*whispers*) husband—ah! how proud
 you look!
 Come when you will!

CARRUTHERS.

Sir Percy Percivale,
 I stand here in your dear dead father's name.

ANGELA.

You stand here, Percy, for yourself—and me.

CARRUTHERS.

Come down; I am your guardian. Know this!
 Without me you do nought, say nought, spend nought.
 Obey me!

SIR PERCY.

Silence, sir, I am your master.
 Whatever powers my father may have given
 To you, there's one that I inherit from him;
 Namely, to tame the insolent.

[*Turns to ANGELA.*

Dear wife!

I go, as a tooth torn from a jaw. Expect
 I quell this folly in a little while
 And come again—to Paris, said you, sweet?

CARRUTHERS.

Leave your mad chatter with that ghastly hag!
 You fool, the woman is sixty if an hour.

SIR PERCY.

My answer to my promised bride is this.

[*He kisses her.*

So, sir! To you, this to remember by.

[*He shoots Carruthers in the leg.*

MOLLY.

Oh, Percy, Percy, am I not your love ?

SIR PERCY.

I am sorry, heartily, Miss Tyson.

MOLLY.

O!

SIR PERCY.

I did indeed speak foolishly.

ANGELA (*aside*).

Your purse!

SIR PERCY (*aside*).

O that were devilish—she's a good girl!

ANGELA.

I hate her.

SIR PERCY.

Buy yourself a pretty hat!

Forget my pretty speeches!

[*Flings his purse down.*]

CARRUTHERS.

O Lord Christ!

In one short day—he was a gentleman!

Sir Percival! Would God I were dead too!

If he had lived—thank God he died! Sir Percy,

Lend me your pistol; here's a heart to hit!

[SIR PERCY *descends, after taking farewell of ANGELA, and appears again on horseback among his men.*]

SIR PERCY.

Arnold and Ritson, tend the wounded man!

To breakfast, gentlemen!

[Looks up.
Farewell!

ANGELA (*waves her handkerchief and throws a kiss*).
Farewell!
[Exeunt.

ANGELA.

Ah, were such nights thy gift, dear Christ, all maids
Were well thy servants. This is past all speaking!
The utmost triumph of a life well spiced
With victory—this beats all. Hortense! Hortense!
Bring me the brandy—pour a double dram!
Here's luck—ah, Satan, give me fifty such!
[Drinks off the brandy.
And now to bed again—to sleep, I am tired.
[She goes in.

[While the scene is being shifted, enter GOWER
as Chorus.

The figure of the Marquis of Glenstrae
Demands the kind attention of the spot
Of consciousness that readers shift away
In awe of such a high exalted pot,
In England's upper Witenagemot
A figure bright enough to make the sun dun,
Yet common—to conceive him asketh not
Imagination's waistcoat buttons undone!
Any old gentleman in any club in London.

SCENE IX.

*Enter the MARQUIS OF GLENSTRAE, Outside
TYSON'S Cottage.*

GLENSTRAE.

Here, then, lives the pretty piece of goods Angela wrote me of. (MOLLY appears at doorway.) Ah! my pretty lass, can you give a poor old man a glass of milk?

MOLLY.

Yes, sir, I will fetch you one. Pray you, set you down awhile.

[He sits down. She goes.]

GLENSTRAE.

Ugh! Ugh! This rheumatism at me again. I wish I had left the business to Arthur.—But there, there, one never knows. (MOLLY comes in with the milk.) There, there! what have you been crying for?

MOLLY.

O sir!

GLENSTRAE.

I am the Marquis of Glenstrae, my pretty wench. If my name and fortune can serve you—there, there! I never could bear to see a pretty lass cry.

MOLLY.

O my lord! I am the most unhappy girl in the world.

GLENSTRAE.

Tell me about it—there, there, don't cry!

MOLLY.

'Twas but yestreen s'ennight.

GLENSTRAE.

A green wound is easiest cured.

MOLLY.

My lord, yestreen s'ennight I was wooed and won, and ere the moonrise he deserted me.

GLENSTRAE.

Dear, dear! That's bad, bad, bad. There, there, no doubt we shall be able to do something.

MOLLY.

My father thinks it is worse—oh, far worse! I am to go away into service—oh! oh!

GLENSTRAE.

And so you shall, my dear, so you shall. Come and live with my wife as her companion, and we will try and find your lover for you. No doubt the arts of this—er—designing female will soon lose their power—there, there, no thanks, I beg! I never could bear to see a pretty wench cry—there, there!

MOLLY.

O sir, my lord, how can I thank you?

GLENSTRAE.

Come in, my dear, and let us see your father about it. . . . Can you spare an old man a kiss?

MOLLY.

O my lord?

GLENSTRAE (*kissing her*).

There, there! Where is your father?

[*They go in.*

SCENE X.

Paris. Night. SIR PERCY and ANGELA in bed, the latter asleep.

SIR PERCY.

O Rose of dawn! O star of evening!
 O glory of the soul of light!
 Let my bright spirit speed on urgent wing!
 Let me be silent, and my silence sing
 Throughout the idle, the luxurious night!
 How soft she breathes! How tender
 Her eyes beam down on me! How slender
 Her pale, her golden body lies!
 Even asleep the dark long lashes move,
 And the eyes see. She dreams of me, of love,
 Of all these bridal ecstasies
 That have been ours this month, this month of joy.
 I am a foolish boy;
 Did not the golden starred Ambassador
 Come like a father to me and implore
 I would look straight on truth?
 "This is no love-sick youth!"
 He cried, "she is nigh sixty years of age;
 Her lovers are a mangled multitude;
 You are one duckling of an infinite brood
 This vixen hath up-gobbled!" Am I mage?
 Ay, for I grant the aged diplomat
 His truth—the truth for him! To me she is
 The rosy incarnation of a kiss,
 The royal rapture of a young delight,
 The mazy music of virginity,
 Sun of the day, moon of the night,

All, all to me!
Angela, angel! Thou hast made me man,
And poet over-man! To thee,
To thee I owe transfiguration, peace,
The wide dominion of the wan
Abyss of air. I can look out and see
Beyond the stars, black seas
Wherein no star may swim,
Thence, far beyond the vast revolving spheres
Dark, idle, grim,
Full of black joys and shadowy unspoken fears,
Wherein I am master.
There is no place for tears.
Cold adamant disaster
Is lord there, and I overlord.
So flits-out, like a sword
Flashed through a duellist's live heart,
My thought; in all the abodes of sense,
The shrines of love and art,
The adytum of omnipotence,
I am supreme, through thee, sweet Angela!
For all the beauties of the universe,
The glories hidden in the flower's cup,
All, all that wakes the soul to worship, verse,
Ripe verse, all wines, all dreams that the soft God lifts up:
All these are eidola,
Mere phantom will 'o the wisps, thy love the real!
There is no more ideal
For me; romance hath shot its bolt;
The badger Jesus skulketh in his holt,
Whence let no dog dare draw him; let him skulk!
All is an empty broken hulk
Floating on waters of derision,
Save for the sole true vision,
Angela, star in chaos! Breathe, breathe deep!
Dear heart of gold, beat slowly in soft sleep!
Her lover watches over Angela.
Angela! O thou wondrous woman,
Thou chaste pale goddess blooded to the human,

Artemis rosy like Hippolyta!
 Ay, my lord, were it true, your liar's lore,
 (Oh blasphemy!) were my young love an whore,
 An hag of sixty; I were greater so.
 He who doth know
 And fears and hates,
 Is not as he who cares not, but creates
 A royal crown from an old bonnet string,
 A maiden from a strumpet: that is to be like God,
 Who from all chaos, from the husks of matter,
 Crusts shed off putrefaction, shakes a wing
 And flies; bids flowers spring from the dull black sod,
 Is not the scientist to shatter
 Beauty by dint of microscope,
 But wakes a wider hope
 And turns all to the beautiful; so I.
 Angela, wake! The midnight hour is nigh:—
 Let us renew the vows of love! appease
 These amorous longings with grave ecstasies,
 The holy act of uttermost communion,
 The sacrament of life! Awake, awake!
 There is a secret in our subtle union
 That masters the grey snake.
 Ay! let him lurk! The Tree of Knowledge we
 Have fed our fill of; this is Eden still.
 Awake, O Love! and let me drink my fill
 Of thee—and thou of me!

[ANGELA *wakes.*

ANGELA.

Ah, Percy, bend you over me! Bend deep!
 Kiss my own eyelids out of tender sleep
 Into exasperate love! Bend close!
 Fill me, thy golden rose,
 With dew of thy dear kisses!

SIR PERCY.

Ay, again!
Love, love, these raptures are like springtide rain
Nesting among green leaves.

ANGELA.

The Lady of Love weaves
Fresh nets of gossamer for thee and me.
O take not back thy lips, even to sing!

SIR PERCY.

Come, rich, come overrolling ecstasy!
I am like to die with joy of everything.

ANGELA.

Die, then, and kiss me dead!

SIR PERCY.

I die! I die!

ANGELA.

Thy flower-life is shed
Into eternity,
A waveless lake.

SIR PERCY.

Sleep, sleep! *[He sleeps.]*

ANGELA.

I am awake—

And being awake I weary somewhat of these je-june platitudes, these rampant ululations of pre-posterous puberty. These are the very eructations of gingerbread; they are the flatulence of calf-sickness. I thought I had taught the boy more sense. He weakens, and I weary. As you will, my Lady Glenstrae! Hortense! (*HORTENSE enters with a glass of brandy.*) Brandy!

HORTENSE.

Here, milady.

ANGELA.

Not enough, you she-devil. More! More!

[Exit. ANGELA falls back to sleep.]

SCENE XI.

Paris. ANGELA, LORD and LADY GLENSTRAE, SIR
PERCY DE PERCIVALE.

ANGELA.

You will not believe what I tell you? These friends will tell you what I mean, and if I mean it! You had your dismissal this morning. Never dare to address me again!

SIR PERCY.

What! I have loved you, and you me—No?—it cannot be so! and now—I am ill—you cast me away! (*Turns his face away.*) Forgive me, I am very weak.

ANGELA (*goes to him and stands over him*).

You shall have truth, you blind little fool. I hate you. From the hour you kissed that village drab, I hated you. I wanted your youth, your strength, your life, your name on my list, your scalp at my girdle. Enough! Do you understand? These friends will teach you. May I never see your pale pasty face again!

[*She spits at him and goes.*

SIR PERCY (*half rises and falls back*).

Oh! oh! It is impossible. Lord Marquis, you are a good man. Tell me, it is a hideous dream.

GLENSTRAE.

No dream, my boy. You are the hundredth she has treated after this fashion. But cheer up now. There! There! Women are all the same. Eh, Maud?

LADY GLENSTRAE.

Who calls? What do you want? Leave me alone!

GLENSTRAE.

Ah, nothing! Nothing, my dear.

LADY GLENSTRAE.

Pull down the blinds.

GLENSTRAE.

Certainly, certainly, my dear, I will ring.

[Rings.

SIR PERCY.

I am sick and sane now. God do so to me and more also if I look at a woman again. What a fool I have been!

GLENSTRAE.

Ah, my boy, you will keep clear of the old ones, I know. (*Enter a footman.*) These blinds down! (*The man obeys.*) But a tasty little morsel like your Molly—your first love.—Eh, my lad? There; there, don't be angry!

SIR PERCY.

Pshaw! You disgust me.

[*The footman turns to go.*

GLENSTRAE (*to footman*).

Wait! (*To SIR PERCY.*) would you tell "her" so?

SIR PERCY.

If I deigned speech.

GLENSTRAE.

Simmons, ask Miss Tyson to step here for a moment. (*Exit servant.*) After which I shall leave you for an hour, my boy. I am to do some business—aha! some rather pleasant business. There! there!

[*Enter MOLLY TYSON.*

MOLLY.

O! Sir Percy! My lord, could you not have told me of this?

GLENSTRAE.

Now, your condition!

MOLLY.

Sir Percy, do you, can you love me? You promised to love me for ever.

SIR PERCY.

Who is this woman? I am weary of these women.

MOLLY.

Sir, sir, acknowledge me. You know not what hangs on it—my honour even!

GLENSTRAE.

A speech of this breed is not in the bond—but let it pass. There! there!

MOLLY.

Sir, I beseech you—for an hour—take me away. I am in terrible trouble of body and soul—danger, misery.

SIR PERCY.

O, go! to the devil for me! What do I care? I am tired, I tell you.

GLENSTRAE.

You see, Molly, I told you true.

MOLLY (*turns to the MARCHIONESS and kneels by her*).

O, my lady Marchioness! You are a great lady. Spare me this shame, your lord's shame, your own shame. . . .

LADY GLENSTRAE.

Take her away. Less light!

GLENSTRAE.

Ha! Ha!

SIR PERCY.

I cannot see your humour, Glenstrae—forgive me so far! And to tell the truth of it, I can do nothing and care to do less.

GLENSTRAE.

Come, Molly!

MOLLY.

Must I, must I? Oh, sir, have pity!

GLENSTRAE.

A bargain's a bargain—but there! there!—what are you growling at? A thousand a year and a flat in Mayfair is better than farmer Tyson's butter and eggs.

MOLLY.

Must it be now?

GLENSTRAE.

Much better now. There, there! Wish me good luck, Percy!

SIR PERCY.

I know nothing of your devil's game. Good luck!

GLENSTRAE.

Caste, John Burns.

[*Exeunt* MARQUIS and MOLLY.

LADY GLENSTRAE.

Hist! Percy, hither to me. Is no one looking?

SIR PERCY.

No, there is no one here.

LADY GLENSTRAE.

I can cure you. I can make you strong and happy again. O what rapture!

SIR PERCY.

What is it?

LADY GLENSTRAE.

Here, let me give you this medicine. A little prick of pain, and then—pleasure—Oh!

[*She bends caressingly over the arm of SIR PERCY DE PERCIVALE, and stabs it with a needle.*

Get a doctor to give you a prescription like this—they ask a hundred francs—oh! it is a shame! Buy a little syringe; and that is Heaven for all your life.—How do you feel?

SIR PERCY.

Why, I am well at once. I never felt better in my life. The devil take my trouble now! I shall go out and conquer the whole world. I shall be the great

magician, the Lord of the Stars. I have it in me to write poetry. Yes, that, first. (*Goes to table and takes pen and paper.*) In praise of—what is your medicine called, dear Marchioness?

LADY GLENSTRAE.

Who calls me? What is it? Leave me alone!

SIR PERCY.

Tell me, dear Lady—Maud!

LADY GLENSTRAE.

Ah! you are the boy.

SIR PERCY.

Your boy, queen!

LADY GLENSTRAE.

Oh, yes, my boy.

SIR PERCY.

What is this medicine called?

LADY GLENSTRAE.

What medicine? I never take medicine!

SIR PERCY.

But you gave it to me—with a needle.

LADY GLENSTRAE.

Oh, that medicine! You like it?

SIR PERCY.

It is heaven, heaven! It is called—

LADY GLENSTRAE.

Morphia.

[*They rest.*]

SCENE XII.

TWO YEARS LATER.

Night: The Strand, opposite the Hotel Cecil. A chemist's shop behind. A grey, old, wizened man staggers into the shop.

CHEMIST.

This prescription has been made up before, sir.

THE MAN.

Yes, I want it renewed, quickly, quickly.

CHEMIST.

I am afraid, sir, it is marked "once only."

THE MAN.

You won't? O if you knew what I suffer! I will pay you double.

CHEMIST.

I'm afraid not, sir. You may try elsewhere.

THE MAN.

O God O God!

[Goes out. To him enter on the pavement a bedraggled female.]

THE WOMAN.

Come home, ducky, won't you?

THE MAN.

O God! O God! I cannot bear it any longer. It is the last I have.

[He fumbles awhile inside his coat.

THE WOMAN (*catching hold of him*).

Come, stand me a glass of wine, there's a dear.

THE MAN.

Ah! that is well. Can I use this woman, I wonder?

THE WOMAN.

O God! I am punished. Sir Percy here! What is the matter, dear my love?

SIR PERCY.

Never mind love—you are?

MOLLY.

O sir, your Molly, that you broke the heart of. See what has come to me!

SIR PERCY.

Ah, if you knew. You are the lucky one!
I am in grips with a more dread disease
Than all your wildest nightmares figure you!

[A carriage rolls by, as from the theatre. It stops owing to a block in the traffic.

MOLLY.

O sir! I am so sorry for you.

SIR PERCY.

And a lot of good that does!

*Enter, on the pavement, the MARQUIS OF GLEN-
STRAE, in his fur coat. The occupant of the
carriage, ANGELA, LADY BAIRD, recognises him
and leans out to greet him.*

GLENSTRAE.

Ah, my dear lady, how do you do this cold weather?

ANGELA.

Well, very well, thank you—and you?

GLENSTRAE.

Well enough—a little rheumatic, perhaps. H'm!

ANGELA.

And the dear Marchioness?

GLENSTRAE.

Oh, very sad—there—there! She has had to be, ah!—er—under treatment.

ANGELA.

Dear, dear, how very sad! Hullo! Look here on this picture and on that!

[MOLLY and SIR PERCY are discovered.]

GLENSTRAE.

Oh! Ah! I think I must go on. I have an appointment at the club.

SIR PERCY.

Yet your lordship walks East.

THE MAN.

Oh, I am not revengeful. Give me a fiver, my Lord Marquis, and we'll call it square.

SIR PERCY.

For me, my angel, get this prescription filled.

ANGELA.

Oh, go to the devil, both of you! Marquis, shall we sup at the Carlton?

GLENSTRAE.

With pleasure—ha! a most amusing meeting—ha!

ANGELA.

Where have you been this evening?

GLENSTRAE.

O most dull, indeed! I had to give the Presidential address at St. Martin's Town Hall for the Children's Special Service Mission.

ANGELA.

Yes, your Lordship is indeed a true friend to the little ones. A curious coincidence. I am the new president of the Zenana Mission.

GLENSTRAE.

You!

ANGELA.

Think of the poor heathen women kept in such terrible seclusion!

GLENSTRAE.

Ah! I had not thought your sympathy was genuine; but there, there! There is more real good in human nature than—

ANGELA.

Genuine enough! But what a jest is this!

GLENSTRAE.

A most remarkable coincidence—a very pleasant reminder. Shall we sup?

ANGELA.

Yes; a magnum of Pol Roger, '84—

GLENSTRAE.

With a dash of brandy in it—

ANGELA.

Will clothe our old loves in a halo of romance again.

GLENSTRAE.

Ha! Ha! We wear well, eh? There, there! (*Opens the carriage door.*)

The Carlton. (*Follows and shuts door.*)

[SIR PERCY and MOLLY part. *The effect of his last dose is worn off; clutching his prescription, he goes off with set teeth. MOLLY goes the other way: to her enter a theatre-goer.*

MOLLY.

Won't you come with me, ducky?

THEATRE-GOER.

Not to-night. See you some other night.

MOLLY.

Oh, do come, dearie!

THEATRE-GOER.

No, I tell you—try Liverpool Street!

[*Curtain.*

What follows is strictly by request in the interest of "healthy optimism."

So far my pen has touched with vivid truth
 The constant story of the eternal struggle
 Of age and sense with flatulence and youth.
 Now—see the venal poet start to juggle!
 Young ladies, you desire to see a comedy!
 The poet's master pen shall twist the river

Of song into a simple to-and-from eddy.
And you shall laugh where once you feared to shiver.
So listen to the happy termination
Of this apparently so sad relation!
'Twill suit your rosy dreams to admiration!
But, be the gatepost witness! it is rot.
Still, if I hide my face with due decorum
Behind a silken kerchief in the forum,
And laugh aloud—at home—
At the silliness of Rome,
You'll forgive me, will you not?

SCENE XIII.

The Meeting-House of the Brethren Gathered Together To The Name Of The Lord Jesus, subsection Anti-Ravenite of the Exclusive section. They are of course Anti-Stewart, and sound on the Ramsgate Question, while observing an armed neutrality in the matter of Mr. Kelly's action. In the midst a table with a loaf and a bottle: also, by their own account, Jesus Christ. Forms, varnished yellow, around it, them, and (I suppose) Him. On one of them is a blackboard with the notice in white paint: "Those not in fellowship please sit behind this board." Accepting this dread limitation are several miserable, well-dressed children with active minds, who, finding nothing to interest them in the proceedings, are pointing out to each other the obscene passages in the Bible; or, this failing from insufficient acquaintance with the sacred volume, are engaged in the Sisyphean task of getting rid of the form in front by deglutition. There is also an anaemic and pimply youth with a sporadic beardlet and a dirty face—if it is a face—who is vastly interested: one would say an habitual reader of the "Daily Mail" watching nobility at lunch.

In front of the board, around the table, are several dear old ladies and gentlemen, a beautiful, overdressed, languid woman, some oilily lousy, lopped, leprous, lack-brained, utterly loathsome tradespeople who gurgle and grin, and a sprinkling of horny-handed sons of toil, very shiny.

Above, with an olive-branch in one hand and a copy of the "Daily News" in the other, floats Mr. G.

K. Chesterton in the position Padmasana, singing "Beneath the Cross of Jesus" with one voice, and attempting "God save the Queen!" with the other in a fashion calculated to turn any marine, if but he be filled with honourable ambition to excel in the traditional exploits of his corps, green with envy.

Behind, and for this reason not previously observed by the vigilant eye of the reader, are Sir Percy Percivale and Molly Tyson.

Near the "Lord's Table" a brother is standing and praying; he intersperses his prayer with repeated "you know's," like the Cairene bore in Marryat's novel.

1ST AGED SISTER (*soto voce*).

Yes! it's all so blessed and romantic, my dear, thank the Lord! They were both brought to Jesus on one night, Ascension Day, as the poor Pagan bodies call it, through the ministration of Mr. Hogwash, the Baptist minister at Brixton (*Mr. Chesterton executes the cake-walk*), who they say is a good man, and very much blessed of the dear Lord, my dear, in his ministrations, though of course he has not been brought out of sect as yet.

2ND AGED SISTER (*sotto voce*).

Dear! Dear! Very sad! Perhaps the dear Lord will open his eyes.

[*The praying brother sits down suddenly, satisfied with himself.*]

A HORNY-HANDED BROTHER (*who rises grunting, as if the action were painful or unfamiliar*).

Matthew Twenth-fourth and Forty-third and he said unto them: Whither of the twins will ye that I deliver unto you, Brabbas, or Djeesas that is cawled Croist? Deer Brotheren

[But let him expound it to himself while we listen to the aged sisters!]

1ST AGED SISTER (*sotto voce*).

So now they're come out of sect, a most marvelous example, my dear, of the wonderful workings of the Holy Ghost, don't you think so, my dear? and I hear they're to be received into fellowship next Lord's Day.

2ND AGED SISTER (*do.*).

The young people are interested in one another, are they not?

1ST AGED SISTER (*do.*).

Yes! it's all very dear and blessed. But hush! how beautifully Mr. Worcester is expounding about Barabbas!

MR. G. K. CHESTERTON (*altogether inaudibly*).

This scene is all description and no drama, and ought to satisfy Mr. Bernard Shaw's idea of a dramatic scene.

[The beautiful woman gets up and goes. The poet hastily follows her out.]

SCENE XIV.

TEN MONTHS LATER.

SIR PERCY DE PERCIVALE'S *Ancestral Hall*.

SIR HERPES ZOSTER, M.D.

SIR GRABSON JABBS, Q.C.

SIR HERPES Z.

Yes, indeed, a most fortunate event. The children weigh 46 lbs. between the three of them. All boys!

SIR GRABSON J.

Good! Good! No chance of heirs failing—ha!
But a word in your ear. This morphia?

SIR HERPES Z.

Not a sign of relapse, old friend, and never will be now. Sir Percy is as sound a man as lives in England—I took four other opinions.

SIR GRABSON J.

None as weighty as your own.

SIR HERPES Z.

You are polite, very polite. Where is Carruthers?

SIR GRABSON J.

He is away to Windsor—the King (*they beat their foreheads eighty-seven times upon the ground*) knights him to-day.

SIR HERPES Z.

I knew he had the O.M. and the F.Z.S.; but this knighthood?

SIR GRABSON J.

He has taken up political economy. He will marry a duchess. Greumoch, too, is doing well. After the—ah—event we all deplored so, he entered the Benedictines at Fort Augustus; and to-morrow they install him as Lord Abbot.

SIR HERPES Z.

What? And he a Highlander?

SIR GRABSON J.

It seems that was a mere disguise; his true name was Johann Schmidt.

SIR HERPES Z.

So? Why the deception?

SIR GRABSON J.

A Jesuit, no doubt! But about Lady Percivale now?

SIR HERPES Z.

Better and better. Old Farmer Tyson, luckily enough, as it turned out, insisted on examination, and no less than twenty-three skilled surgeons—all men of note!—declared her to be “virgo intacta.”

SIR GRABSON J.

Eh? What?

SIR HERPES Z.

You see, Englishmen—ah!

SIR GRABSON J.

Er—ah?

SIR HERPES Z.

Ah!

SIR GRABSON J.

Er—ah! As Whistler said, “You put out your arm, and you hit three”—eh?

SIR HERPES Z.

Probably. At least the anatomical detail is certain. Here is a ph—

SIR GRABSON J.

Tush, tush, old friend, I can take your word for it.

SIR HERPES Z.

You have some good news to announce, I think, as well as I.

SIR GRABSON J.

Sad for the general commonwealth, but of particular joy in this house. The Marquis of Glenstrae had the misfortune yesterday to fall against a circular saw in motion.

SIR HERPES Z.

Dear, dear! and how was that?

SIR GRABSON J.

His lordship was very fond of children, as you may know. It seems he was pursuing—it is, I am told, an innocent child’s game!—one of the factory hands; and—he stumbled. He was sawn slowly into no less than thirty-eight pieces.

SIR HERPES Z.

But how does this bear on the case?

SIR GRABSON J.

Dying without issue, he has left all to Sir Percy here ; the King (*cheers from large but unseen body of retainers, who have been eavesdropping*), moreover, unwilling that the Marquisate should die out, will bestow it on the same lucky young fellow.

SIR HERPES Z.

This is marvellous news !

SIR GRABSON J.

Again, Lady Baird has just perished in awful agony. Having suffered for twenty years from a hideous and incurable disease, she brought matters to a climax last night by falling into a barrel of boiling sulphuric acid.

SIR HERPES Z.

How so ?

SIR GRABSON J.

It was her bath-night.

SIR HERPES Z.

An ! enamel ! But why did it hurt her ?

SIR GRABSON J.

(*Impressively.*) It is the finger of God !

The Poet concludes.

Now I have written four-and-twenty hours
 Without a decent rest by Kandy Lake.
 I invoke the urgent elemental powers
 To bring all to an end for Buddha's sake.
 I must bid all ye matrons fond farewell,
 Knowing your inmost thoughts ; that, had ye dared,
 Ye would be just as far "en route" for hell
 As Angela, the gentle Lady Baird ;

And all ye youths, aware that Percy's fall
 Is something to be envied of ye all ;
 And all ye parsons, seeing that ye pray
 Your Father for the Luck of Lord Glenstrae.

Enough of this! Insistent Fates
 Bid me return to rhyming 8s.
 I say what I have seen ill done
 In honest clean-lived Albion ;
 And if these things the green tree grows,
 What price the dry, my lords? Who knows?
 You say that I exaggerate ;
 That "we are not as bad as that."
 (Excuse the doubtful tag of verse !)
 "Au contraire," you are vastly worse.
 I see the virtuous and the vicious,
 The "sans reproche" and the suspicious,
 All tarred with the same nasty tar,
 Because—I see you as you are.
 Permit me to reduce the list
 Of optimist and pessimist
 By just my name! I am neither, friends.
 I know a stick has got two ends!
 Nothing were easier than to show
 That Lady Baird avoided woe ;
 And Lord Glenstrae, that worthy peer,
 Saved whisky by supplying beer.
 For what is good, and makes for peace,
 What evil, wisdom must increase
 Well near omniscience before
 One guesses what it all is for.
 Still, since "de gustibus not est"—
 (My schoolboy readers know the rest !)
 I much prefer—that is, mere I—
 Solitude to Society.
 And that is why I sit and spoil
 So much clean paper with such toil
 By Kandy Lake in far Ceylon.
 I have my old pyjamas on :

I shake my soles from Britain's dust :
I shall not go there till I must ;
And when I mustvah, you suppose
Even I must!—I hold my nose.
Farewell, you filthy-minded people !
I know a stable from a steeple.
Farewell, my decent-minded friends !
I know arc lights from candle-ends.
Farewell! A poet begs your alms,
Will walk awhile among the palms.
An honest love, a loyal kiss,
Can show him better worlds than this ;
Nor will he come again to yours
While he knows champak-stars from sewers.