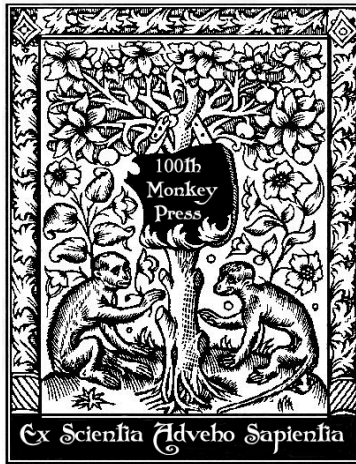


THE WORLD'S TRAGEDY

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

THE
WORLD'S TRAGEDY

BY

ALEISTER CROWLEY



PARIS

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must not be imported into England or America.*

—
1910

DEDICATION

TO PAN

I owe this book, as all that I possess, to my playmates in the Garden of Eros; but they are rich; they want for nothing; therefore I give it to the poor boys and girls of England, so that, shaking off morality and religion, they may be partakers in Love unto the glory of

PAN.

PREFACE

I have it on hearsay that I was born on the 12th of October in the year 1875 of Pseudo Christ. I was born dumb; and the first incident of my career was the cutting of my frænum linguæ, that I might speak plainly. The operation, as this volume shows, was a complete success. Of my early life I remember little; chiefly a large garden with, at the end of it, a wood which overlooked the road and afforded vantage for archers. There was war in the land; my cousin Gregor Grant, six years older than myself, and a few other stern exiles, desperately banded against the rest of the neighbourhood. I remember leaping from the top of a sand pit in the character of Sir Garnet Wolseley and nearly transfixing with my father's alpenstock an astonished navy who had not properly prepared the trying role of Arabi Pasha, suddenly and without warning assigned to him by our Army Council. I remember too being disarmed and chased by a small Italian boy (the Mc. Callum Mohr) whose bandbox, containing doubtless an exquisite bonnet, I as Greumoch Dhuibh Mc. Alpin had pierced with that same knotty lance. Nor shall I easily forget how we filled the tea-urn at the Brethrens' tea-fight with old Mr. Sherrall's castor-oil, to the discomfiture of the faithful, who were too polite to call the attention of the hostess to their interior pangs.

Joyful too was the great tea at Mr. Nunnerley's where we delayed the prayer meeting one whole hour by plying Mrs. Musty with avalanches of food after everyone else had finished. Ah joy! as piglike she munched on! while the hapless brethren (torn

between impatience and politeness) wrung their hands in anguish.

Only my natural reluctance to strike a tragic chord so early in my narrative obliges me to omit some account of the circumstances in which the well-named Mrs. Clapham the fishmonger's wife was expelled from "fellowship."

But above all I remember how we soused Leggett's boy, known as the Living Mushroom from the shape of his hat, in old Ailes's pig-tub.

And then my father died, and the note changes. To explain, I find myself obliged to give a short account of the Plymouth Brethren, their tenets, character, and history.

THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN

The religious movement which obtained this name through the sudden and enormous success of an evangelistic crusade at Plymouth in its early days was started in Ireland.

It was an aristocratic and intellectual movement. John Nelson Darby, a learned man of good family, reasoned thus :

The Bible is the Word of God.

If its literal interpretation is once abandoned, the whole structure crashes to earth.

This it will be seen is identically the Catholic position, save that for "literal" Rome reads "Ecclesiastical." Darby, too, found himself forced into the practical admission that "literal" meant Darbian; for some of the more obvious contradictions and absurdities in the Bible are too necessary to the practical side of religion to be ignored.

Seeing this, they devised an elaborate system of mental water-tight compartments. The contradictions of Old and New Testament were solved by a Doctrine that what was sauce for the Jewish "Dispensation" was not necessarily sauce for the Christian "Dispensation." Cleverer than Luther, they made possible the Epistle of James by a series of sophisms which really deserve to be exposed as masterpieces of human self-deception. My space forbids.

So, despite all the simplicity of the original logical position, they were found shifting as best they might from compromise to compromise. But this they never saw themselves; and so far did they take their principle that my father would refuse to buy railway shares because railways were not

mentioned in the Bible! Of course the practice of finding a text for everything means ultimately "I will do as I like", and I suspect my father's heroics only meant that he thought a slump was coming.

Their attitude to human reason, too, was simply wonderful.

Some Wicked Man would point out that the Jonah story was contrary to our experience of possibility.

THE P. B.—The word is not "whale" in the Hebrew: it probably means "dog-shark."

(This "solution" is actually printed in a book of the liar and slanderer Torrey).

THE W. M.—Our experience of dog-sharks tells us—

THE P. B.—What, after all, is human reason?

To the Greeks foolishness, etc. The wisdom of man is foolishness, etc. We must have faith.

THE W. M.—In men?

THE P. B.—Never. In God!

THE W. M.—But you believe in the Bible?

THE P. B.—Every word of it, thank God!

THE W. M.—In the Protestant or the Catholic Bible?

The Bible was written by men, translated by men, criticised by scholars again and again. You accept all the criticisms up to 1611 and reject all later. Why?

THE P. B.—There is a place prepared for the devil and his angels to which you (my poor dear brother) will most surely go! Why not simply accept Christ as your Saviour and Lord? (Then he gets started; and the rest must be heard to be believed).

So—is it a type of all logic?—their simple Yea and Nay became more casuistical than Dens or Escobar, and their strict adherence to the Commands of the Bible became a mere loosening of the strings of conscience.

An irreligious man may have moral checks ; a Plymouth Brother has none. He is always ready to excuse the vilest crimes by quoting the appropriate text, and invoking the name of Christ to cover every meanness which may delight his vain and vicious nature.

For the Plymouth Brethren were in themselves an exceptionally detestable crew. The aristocrats who began the movement were of course just aristocrats, and their curious system left them so. But they ran a form of "Early Christian" Spiritual Socialism, by having no appointed priest or minister, and they were foolish enough to favour their followers financially.

Thus Mr. Giblets—let us call him—the third-best butcher in the village found (on the one hand) that while at church he was nobody at all, and in the chapel and elder, in the little meeting in the Squire's morning-room he was no less than the minister of God and the mouthpiece of the Holy Ghost ; just as on the other hand it was only natural that the orders from the Hall should come his way, and leave the first-best butcher lamenting, and the second-best bewildered. So that in my time the sect (though it is only fair to point out that they refused to be described as a sect, since what they had done was not to form a new sect, but to "come out of sect",—this they maintained in spite of the fact that they were far more exclusive than any other religious body in Europe) was composed of a few of the old guard, my father the last of them all, and the meanest crew of "canaille" that ever wriggled.

With my father's death the small schisms which had hitherto lopped off a few members every year or two were altogether surpassed by the great Raven heresy which split the body into two equal halves, and extinguished the last sparks of its importance.

I am going beyond my subject, but I cannot refrain from telling the awful story of the Meeting at Oban.

The Meeting at Oban consisted of a Mr. Cameron and his wife and the bedridden mother of one of the two, I forget which. Now as it is written: "wheresoever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" it was all very well: but two forms a quorum. Jesus will not come for less. This has never been disputed by any doctor of the Brethren. Wigram is clear on the point; if Darby had ever been clear on any point, it would have been on that; Kelly never denied it; even Stuart was sound in this matter, and Stoney himself (though reluctantly) gave his adhesion. To hold a Meeting you must have two persons present. Let nobody try to upset this; for once I positively insist. No less than two for a Meeting! I will brook no opposition; I mean to have my own way in the matter; I am not to be played with. Two or more make a Meeting. There; my foot is down, let's hear no more senseless cavil about it!

Well, I need hardly say that Mr. and Mrs. Cameron took opposite sides of the controversy. When the glad wires flashed the message that Mr. Raven in the Meeting at Ealing had deliberately said with slow and weighty emphasis: "He that hath the Son hath eternal life", Mrs. Cameron almost wept for joy. When (the message continued) Major Mc. Arthy had risen to his feet and retorted: "He that hath the Son of God hath everlasting life", Mr. Cameron executed a Highland though funereal fling.

When Mr. Raven, stung to the quick, had shaken his fist at the Major and yelled: "Brother, you're a sinful old man!" Mrs. Cameron "had always known there was something" and invented a ruined government. But—oh the laughter of her husband when the telegraph brought the Major's retort "Brother,

have you no sin?" Spoken with an accent of mildness which belied the purple of his face.

In short, the Meeting at Oban had split. Mr. Cameron had withdrawn from the Lord's supper!!! It was therefore absolutely necessary for both of them to assure themselves that the bedridden mother was of their way of thinking, or neither could hold the "Morning Meeting"; though I suppose either could preach the Gospel—*morosa vultas!*

Unhappily, that excellent lady was a hard case. She was quite deaf and very nearly blind; while mentally she had never been remarkable for anything beyond a not unamiable imbecility. However, there was but one thing to be done, to argue her into conviction.

They agreed to take eight-hour shifts; and for all I know, they are arguing still, and neither of the Meetings at Oban can meet!

A BOYHOOD IN HELL

The Revd. H. d'Arcy Champney M. A. of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, had come out of sect. He had voted at the Parliamentary elections by crossing out the names of the candidates and writing: "I vote for King Jesus."

He had started a school for the Sons of Brethren at 51, Bateman Street, Cambridge. May God bite into the bones of men the pain of that hell on earth (I have prayed often) that by them it may be sowed with salt, accursed for ever! May the maiden that passes it be barren, and the pregnant woman that beholdeth it abort! May the birds of the air refuse to fly over it! May it stand as a curse, as a fear, as an hate, among men! May the wicked dwell therein! May the light of the Sun be withheld therefrom, and the light of the Moon not lighten it! May it become the home of the shells of the dead, and may the demons of the pit inhabit it! May it be accursed, accursed, accursed—accursed for ever and ever!

And still, standing as I stand in the prime of early manhood, free from all the fetters of the body and the mind, do I curse the memory thereof unto the ages.

It was a good enough school from the point of examiners, I dare say. Morally and physically it was an engine of destruction and corruption. I am just going to put down a few facts haphazard as they come to my memory; you may form your own judgment.

1. We were allowed to play Cricket, but not to score runs, lest it should excite the vice of "emulation."

2. Champney told me, a child of not yet twelve years old, that he had never consummated his marriage, (Only the very acute verbal memory which I possess enabled me years after to recall and interpret his meaning. He used a coarser phrase).

3. We were told that "the Lord had a special care of the school, and brought to light that which was done in darkness", etc., etc., "ad nauseam." "The instrument was on this occasion so-and-so, who had nobly come forward, etc., etc." In other words, hypocrisy and sneaking were the only virtues.

Naturally, one of several boys who might be involved in the same offence would take fright and save his skin by sneaking. The informer was always believed implicitly, as against probability, or even possibility, with complete disregard of the testimony of other and independent witnesses.

For instance, a boy named Glascott, with insane taint, told Mr. Champney that he had visited me (12 years old) at my mother's house during the holidays—true so far, he had—and found me "lying drunk at the bottom of the stairs." My mother was never asked about this; nor was I told of it. I was put into "Coventry" i.e. nor master nor boy might speak to me, or I to them. I was fed on bread and water; during playhours I worked in the school-room; during work-hours I walked solitary round and round the playground. I was expected to "confess" the crime of which I was not only innocent, but unaccused.

This punishment, which I believe criminal authorities would consider severe on a poisoner, went on for a term and a half. I was, at last, threatened with expulsion for my refusal to "confess", and so dreadful a picture of the horrors of expulsion did they paint me—the guilty wretch, shunned by his

fellows, slinks on through life to a dishonoured grave, etc.—that I actually chose to endure my torture, and to thank my oppressor.

Physically, I broke down. The strain and the misery affected my kidneys; and I had to leave school altogether for two years. I should add in fairness that there were other accusations against me, though, as you shall hear, almost equally silly.

I learnt at last, through the intervention of my uncle, in a lucid interval, what I was supposed to have done. I was said to have tried “to corrupt Chamberlain”—not our great patriotic statesman, shifty Joe—but a boy. (I was 12 years old, and quite ignorant of all sexual matters till long after). Also I had “held a mock prayer meeting.” This I remembered. I had strolled up to a group of boys in the playground, who were indeed holding one. As they saw me one said: “Brother Crowley will now lead us in prayer.” Brother Crowley was too wary, and walked away. But instead of doing what a wise boy would have done: gone straight to the head, and accused them of forty-six distinct unmentionable crimes, I let things slide. So, fearing that I might go, they hurried off themselves, and told him how that wicked Crowley had tried to lead them away from Jesus.

Worse, I had called Page 1 a Pharisee. That was true; I had said it. Dreadful of me! And Page 1, who “walked very close to Jesus”, of course went and told.

Yes, they all walked very close to Jesus—as close as Judas did.

4. A boy named Barton was sentenced to 120 strokes of the cane on his bare shoulders, for some petty theft of which he was presumably innocent.

Superb was the process of trial. It began by an extra long prayer-time, and Joshua's account of the sin of Achan, impressively read. Next, an hour or two about the Lord's care of the school, the way

He brought sin to light. Next, when well worked up, and all our nerves on the jump, who stole what? Silence. Next, the Lord's care in providing a witness—like the witnesses against Naboth! Then the witness and his story, as smooth as a policeman's. Next, sentence. Last, execution, with intervals of prayer!

Champney's physique being impaired, one may suppose by his excessive devotion of Jesus, he arranged to give 60 strokes one day, and 60 the next. My memory fails—perhaps Barton will one day oblige with his reminiscences—but I fancy the first day came so near killing him that he escaped the second.

I remember one licking I got—on the legs, because flogging the buttocks excites the victim's sensuality!—15 minutes prayer, 15 strokes of the cane, 15 minutes more prayer, 15 more strokes—and more prayer to top it!

5. On Sunday the day was devoted to "religion." Morning prayers and sermon (about 45 Min). Morning "Meeting" (1 1/2 to 2 hrs.). Open-air preaching on Parker's Piece (say 1 hour). Bible reading and learning by heart. Reading of the few books "sanctioned for Sunday" (say 2 hours). Prayer-meeting (called voluntary, but to stay away meant that some sneak in the school would accuse you of something next day), (say 1 hour). Evening prayer and Sermon (say 30 Minutes). Preaching of the Gospel in the meeting-room (1 1/2 hours), Ditto on Parker's Piece (say 1 hour). Prayer before retiring (say 1/2 hour).

6. The "Badgers' Meeting." Every Monday night the school was ranged round the back of the big schoolroom, and the scourings of Barnswell (Cambridge's slum) let in, fed, preached to, and dismissed.

Result, epidemics of ring worm, measles, and mumps.

Oh no! not a result; the Lord's hand was heavy upon us because of some undiscovered sin.

I might go on for a long while, but I will not. I hope there are some people in the world happy enough to think that I am lying, or at least exaggerating. But I pledge my word to the literal truth of all I have said, and there are plenty of witnesses alive to confirm me, or to refute me. I have given throughout the actual names, addresses and other details.

ADOLESCENCE

Too ill with albuminuria brought on by the savage treatment of Champney to do any regular work, I was sent away with various tutors, mostly young men from Cambridge, members of the unspeakable C. I. C. C. U.

I remember in my first term at Cambridge how I was in the rooms of a leading light of the C. I. C. C. U., the Revd. Something Doddridge, my Uncle Tom's trusted henchman.

I remember how eloquently he held forth on the courage to stop any "impure conversation." I remember how impressed we were; how a gentleman with an "honourable" in front of his name, destined to be celebrated in the world of motors and balloons, walked into the room and told us rather a lively story. The Reverend something Doddridge thought of the "honourable" and laughed pleasantly.

I remember how, boys as we were, we filed austere from the rooms without farewell. Oh, you must know the C. I. C. C. U.!

I remember too how this Doddridge, while in charge of my morals, aided and abetted me in extinguishing street lamps; and how when a policeman pounced upon me, he forsook me and fled! A true disciple of Jesus!

I had no playmates; my morals might be corrupted! Only the "children of brethren" were eligible, and these were as a rule socially impossible.

I was always being watched for signs of masturbation, and always being warned and worried about it. It says something for human innocence

that after four years of this insane treatment I was still absolutely ignorant, though on fire in every nerve to learn the practice that people made so much fuss about.

But really—my tutors! Of all the surpassing prigs! I was so mentally shattered by the disease and torture—for both continued—that I remember practically nothing of the next two years.

But at least I shall take care that this book comes into the hands of the Very Reverend Armitage Robinson Esq., M. A., D. D., Dean of Westminster; for though I suppose he knows how his missionary brother Jack seduced to sodomy his missionary brother Fred, he may still be ignorant of how that brother Fred (one of my tutors) attempted to seduce me in his own mother's house at Maze Hill. This came a little later; and I knew exactly what he was doing, as it happened. I let him go as far as he did, with the deliberate intention of making sure on that point.

I think my readers will agree—enough of my tutors!

I ought to make an honourable exception of one Archibald Douglas, an Oxford man and a traveller. He taught me sense and manhood, and I shall not easily forget my debt to him. I hear he is dead—may earth lie light upon him!

Of course my Mother and her brother my uncle Tom couldn't stand him. (I must excuse my mother and my Uncle. The former was the best of all possible mothers, only marred beyond belief by the religious monomania which perhaps started in what one may call "Hysteria of Widowhood"; the latter a typical sexual degenerate.) They stole his letters and faked up some excuse for getting rid of him. And if "an orphan's curse can drag to hell a spirit from on high" what of the curse of a child on those who betrayed him in their bigotry and meanness to such torture as I have described?

My whole soul cramped; society denied me; books debarred me, with the rare exceptions of Scott, Ballantyne, and some Dickens, with a few even worse!

To illustrate the domestic principles of literary criticism:

I was forbidden David Copperfield because of "little Em'ly"—Emily being my Mother's name, I might cease to respect her. For the same reason she proscribed the Bab Ballads, recommended by a rash tutor, because "Emily Jane was a nursery maid"! Coleridge's Ancient Mariner was condemned because of the water-snakes whom he "blessed unaware"; snakes being cursed in Genesis!

As it happened, however, I had a backbone in me some where. I had always refused to join the sneaking hypocrite gang at Champney's; now I accepted the war, and began to fight for my freedom. I went long walks in the mountains, where my tutors could not follow me, and where delightful peasant girls could and did follow me—God bless them!

One day I had a difference of opinion with a tutor, in the course of which he fell from a rock into a loch (whose name I forget) near Forsinard. Memory fails to recall the actual cause of dispute; but I think I had thrown his fishing-rod into the loch, and thought that it was expedient for him to try and retrieve it.

The same night he found me in the heather with Belle Mc. Kay the local beauty (God bless her!), and gave me up as a bad job.

So I fought the swine! They sent me to Malvern, where my weakness made me the prey of every bully, and saved me from the attention of every budding Eulenburg. Sodomy was the rule at Malvern; my study-companion used even to take money for it. I cunningly used my knowledge of the fact to get taken away from the school.

It must not be supposed that we had no other amusements. There was "pill-ragging"; a form of fight whose object was to seize and hurt the opponent's testicles; and "greasing"; i.e., spitting either in each other's faces or secretly so the victim should not detect the act. In my time this had died out of the other houses; but still flourished in my house "Huntingdon's" No.4. There was bullying, too; and now and then cricket and football.

They sent me to Tonbridge; my health broke down; partly, one may say, through what would have been my own fault or misfortune if I had been properly educated; but, as it was, was the direct result of the vile system that, not content with torturing me itself, handed me over bound and blindfold to the outraged majesty of Nature.

I escaped then from Tonbridge. They sent me to Eastbourne to a P. B. family where I had more liberty, and could have been happy; but the revolting cruelties which they inflicted on the only pretty and decent member of the family, my dear "sister" Isabelle, caused me one day to knock their heads together and walk out of the house.

They sent me to Cambridge. I found myself my own master, and settled down to lead a righteous, sober and godly life; and to make up for lost time in the matter of education.

Outside purely scholastic subjects, they had taught me to fight, to love the truth, to hate oppression,—and by God! I think they taught me well.

On my soul, I should thank them!

THE WRITING OF THE WORLD'S TRAGEDY

It has been necessary to sketch this part of my life in order to exhibit the atmosphere which I am bound to connect with Christianity, or at least English Christianity.

Certainly the vast majority of English people, of those who are religious at all, belong either to Evangelicalism or Dissent; and the tyranny of these is nearly if not quite as bad as that of the Plymouth Brethren.

I had, however, cut myself adrift from all these things.

I had lived among the great men of the earth, and the great mountains of the earth.

Pollitt had made a poet of me; Eckenstein had made a man of me; Cecil Jones and Allan Bennett had made a God of me. I had forgotten the Plymouth Brethren!

But early in this spring, I went down to Eastbourne to my mother's house, and some of the old bitterness came back.

In her house were two vile old women, hypocrites and slaves to the marrow. The mere meanness and old-maid-ishness of it would have sickened me. These mangebitten cats!

But there was worse. Only one food was on the table for breakfast, lunch, and dinner; and that food cold boiled Jesus. I stomached it well enough—God's blood! I had my belly full of yore and knew to despise it—but in vain I tried to talk of other things. The Boulter blasphemy case was on, and the cold boiled Jesus was so high that it literally stank. So did the women! I stood it for break-

fast, I stood it for lunch, I stood it for tea—but 'twasn't tea, 'twas Jesus!

Dinner came; cold boiled Jesus, and the scrag end of it at that!

I went out and stood by the sea. I was lost in reverie. Here were these hags of hell, the product of an unvarying diet of cold boiled Jesus!

By God! could I not save somebody? These had once been fresh healthy English girls, fit for life and laughter. C. B. J. had mummified them to what they were. I would be the Saviour of the future!

I must have wandered in my meditation; for presently I found myself lying on the grass under the full moon and the stars, the sea's low plash beneath my feet, the soft breeze blowing over me, a whisper—oh essence of the winds and of the seas of the world!—in my ears (I seem to remember even now that her name was Mabel—thank you, Mabel!) and then I gazed upon the moon and vowed myself knight of Artemis, to bring the truth into this England of hypocrisy, light in its superstition of rationalism, love in its prudery, chastity into its whoredom!

So I swore, and rose up and kissed Mabel and went home in the night of the holy vision—for the god Pan appeared to me, and abode in me and I in him—and wrote for four nights night by night, until the World's Tragedy lay finished and perfect before me.

All day I kept myself up to the mark by the stern penance of C. B. J.; all night I wrote—and wrote.

So fierce I wrote that—six months later—I have written no word since. I have poured forth all the vials, and loosed all the seals. From that supreme effort I am fallen exhausted—until, as it may chance, the Gods renew my vigour.

And all my other work I count as nothing; for I have written this in Pan, and in Pan I am content.

To the boys and girls of England I give my book, the charter of their freedom.

ALICE WESLEY TORR OR ALEISTER CROWLEY?

With one thing and another to worry me I was a nervous wreck all this March and April of 1908. I was wasting my time in constructing anagrams on my name to publish this book under. Which shows how dependant the best of us is on his in'ards. If an Army marches on its belly, so does a philosopher think on his. My best on another's

So lost indeed was I in this jungle of delusion that I was quite surprised when one beautiful sunset in May, sitting at ease under the shadow of the Lion de Belfort, I became aware of a temptation of the devil. Quite a number of people had been asking me during the last few months to compromise with respectability. And by Jove! I nearly did! I was ill—forgive the wavering! I am wise in time, luckily, and my "Retro Satanus" takes this form.

Let me define my position. It is quite true that my attitude to real life, the life of Nature, is perfectly "sane" and "wholesome." In a perfect society I should regard even my "Alice" as perverted art: for in a sane world one is insane to proclaim sanity. But art (which is the Word of the Masters to the World) must move with that world and follow it into its corruption, redeeming the same. The simple humanity, the great guffawing indecency, of Shakespeare is well enough for the pagan society of Elizabeth. The splendid savage Jehovah is sane enough and grand enough for nomadic Israel. But since then the World is Christianized, and there is a need for the bitterness of Shelley and Byron, the intense "justification by sin" doctrine of Swinburne. Perhaps we are wrong to have thought of

Swinburne as having recanted; it may be that he said to himself: "Well, I'm sick of these dogs! I will write simple lyrics and shut out the world." Still, the result is not good. Moreover we who are in the forefront of the fight are annoyed with Achilles—and anyhow there is no excuse for such a Patroclus as Watts-Dunton!

Well, however that may be, here we are in the fight; and if I am called an anarchist, "soit!" But I throw my bomb with a difference. If I do not throw a physical bomb, it is only because there is none big enough. For the Government is in the hands of the bourgeoisie and the canaille, and it is for us aristocrats to throw the bombs. There can be no peace between Socrates and Athens, between Jesus and Jerusalem. We must then first throw moral bombs, and this book is mine!

It is a curious position. All my sympathy is with my own class—birth, education, wealth, courage, pride. These are my heritage. But all my own people are busy pretending to live the dirty, stinking, lousy, poor; Coriolanus "licking the breech of a leprous hangman." (Not Crowley, this time: Catullus).

So that on mature consideration I drop the Revd. C. Verey of "Clouds without Water"—it is only one more satire. The invention was not cowardice but art. My sympathies are entirely with the alleged author of the Quatorzains; in a world of Winnington-Ingrams it is about the best that any one can do.

At the same time, I have a foible: I should like to produce ideal poetry; poetry free from the false conditions of modern crapulence. "Clouds without Water" and this World's Tragedy are mostly nonsense to a Nina Olivier or a Dorothy Lamb, those avatars of Pagan art. But to a Dilke, lamed by a kick from the British ass; or to a Burton, swimming in the Sea of Glue—they must seem miracles

of virility and truth. Natural love and love of Nature are poetry everywhere; and (idleness!) I hope one day to be able to leave the English hypocrites to their own beastliness, and live in my own world. Until I am wanted; in the hour of battle.

One thing I must ask; let this book be assiduously circulated among the young. There is hope there if anywhere. Let me seduce the boys of England, and the oldsters may totter unconverted to their graves. Then these boys, becoming men, may bring about the new heaven and the new earth. You are not a Crowleian till you can say fervently "Yes, thank God, I am an atheist." For the 'transvaluation of all values' must yet again take place, when those are all dead and damned who have forced us into the painful position we now occupy.

The "man-eating beasts because of whom we dare not love thee", once gone, we can revive the true cultus of the Logos; the chastity-mongering masturbators once swept away, we can without reproach follow our natural inclination to purity: the lawyers and millionnaires and demagogues once squelched, we can enjoy our property without alarm.

Young men! there is the enemy. I am no coward, I hope; and believe that I may make a fairly good general—at least no traitor. But without an army I am useless; a Napoleon at St Helena.

Give me my army, young men; and we will sweep these dogs into the sea.

Those in the front rank will have the honour of getting killed first.

PORNOGRAPHY

Now to give battle one must find a disputed point, and struggle for its mastery. English pudibundery being the main strong hold of the Puritan, I now concentrate my guns on that position.

With the exception of the Chinese classics and one or two of the Hindu and Buddhist, all authors of antiquity are wholly or partially concerned to discourse frankly, joyously, amusingly, of the sexual act. Of modern authors we observe that only the pornographic survive. Shakespeare, Sterne, Swift, Rabelais, Villon,—what names have we to put against these? Milton and some lesser.

And to-day? What authors of the last century do we find on our shelves? Byron, exiled, yet with wealth sufficient to mock his foes; Shelley, expelled from Oxford, exiled, robbed of his children; Keats, bullied into consumption; Blake, nigh starved; Flaubert, Baudelaire, Gautier, Zola, Richepin all prosecuted, suppressed; Verlaine, his life a mere holiday between spells of prison. I cannot quote you the good authors, the popular authors; neither I nor any one else can remember their names.

All this babble about indecency is the merest froth; as Vizetelly dies, broken by imprisonment for the crime of having translated Zola, that same Zola is being feasted at the Guildhall by the Lord Mayor of London.

But, then, of course, the question arises "what is pornography?"

It has been justly remarked that the greatest men are those who play upon the whole scale of human emotions, from the spiritual to the ob-

scene. The humour of Aristophanes, Shakespere, Sterne, and Rabelais is identical with that of the ordinary smoking-room story; only a deal better done. Nor is there any other eternal humour; other kinds depend on the accidents of the age.

You never find a single impure line in any of these authors, any gloating on impurity. The laughter is hearty, there is no schoolboy sniggering—no consciousness of guilt.

(So even with Keats' Gadfly and Sharing Eve's Apple; Browning's bawdy jests in Pippa Passes, the Ring and the Book, One Word More, La Saisiaz and elsewhere; cleaner, truly, than the furtive eroticism in Prometheus Unbound. Shelley was more consciously under the curse of Jesus.) It is this "consciousness of sin" which is to my mind the essentially Christian attitude. It is this which inspires the outcry against art and simple pleasures; these swine nose everywhere for filth, and grunt with shocked glee when they find it.

All serious subject are tabooed as "bad form!" (I must add in parenthesis that the eugenic prigs and sex-problem pigs are every whit as bad. They are just as shocked at Rabelais as the other Puritans).

There is nothing impure in passion, if only it be elemental and strong. The whole soul storms the height of heaven, exults, laughs, enjoys, falls exhausted. The thing is clean.

It is the lady novelist that drags her snail-track across the desert of bad literature. Nothing so excites my loathing as to see these ghouls licking their chops over the adventures of some dirty slut of a Princess. They scent indecency in passion beyond the marriage-tie: they will not even allow a man to be in love with his own wife. Why shouldn't he be? He is now and then. I happen to know it. The long and short of the whole matter is this, that there is nothing clean but ecstasy.

Whether that ecstasy is the divine spirituality of Visvarupadarshana, or the sexual splendour of Epipsychidion, or the laughter of Catullus, all is pure and perfect.

It is the vision of the God that is pure; it is the veils that stain. Whether the curtain of falsehood be moral, or ethical, or romantic, it is a stain. Weakness is evil and impure; strength is divine and clean.

A mountain is more naked than a marsh. By your leave, gentiles, I will continue to live on the mountain.

SODOMY

Further, lest 'broad-minded' prigs come to smash me by their aid, I shall fight openly for that which no living Englishman dare defend, even in secret—sodomy!

At school I was taught to admire Plato and Aristotle, who recommend sodomy to youths. I am not so rebellious as to oppose their dictum; and in truth there seems no better way to avoid the contamination of woman and the morose pleasures of solitary vice. (Not that women themselves are unclean; it is the worship of them as ideals that rots the soul). Again we may say that all the great men of antiquity were sodomites: Socrates, Caesar, Alexander, Martial, Catullus, Virgil, Achilles; Napoleon, Frederick the Great, Goethe, Shakespeare, Bacon, an unbroken line of English monarchs; Mohammed, Benvenuto Cellini, Wilde, Symonds, Emerson, Pater, Fitz-Gerald, Leighton, Whitman, Michael Angelo, Leonardo, and a host of others—even unto this hour. But of this hour I will not speak. I am now collecting a great body of evidence similar to that which Herr Harden has gathered in Germany, and involving an even higher class of society. Not in the least to show the corruptions of that class; but to proclaim sodomy as an aristocratic virtue, which our middle class had better imitate if they wish to be smart.

If I have not already published the correspondence in my possession between the late Duke of Clarence and "Boy Morgan"—as well as many other important papers—and a pretty penny they have cost me!—it is not for any dog-in-the manger

reasons, but because it would coincide so dramatically with the moment when, like Socrates, I get into trouble for corrupting morality, and because I never like to leave a job half done. It is almost incredible how large a number of peers there are against whom I have not a shadow of evidence or even suspicion. Luckily the judges are less wary. While the bishops are such easy game as to be hardly worth powder and shot.

There, I've done it now!

Vous avez écrit contre le bon Dieu ; c'est mauvais, mais Il le vous pardonnera.

Vous avez écrit contre Jesus Christ ; c'est pire encore, mais Il le vous pardonnera.

Mais vous avez écrit contre Leurs Excellences, et Elles ne le vous pardonneront jamais.

But this lion can bite back!

Nor after all, is fear precisely the sentiment inspired by the spectacle of a nation which has so recently placed at the head of its affairs that William Ewart Gladstone who shaped his policy by the predictions of a charlatan clairvoyant in Bond Street, while his drunken harlot performed her wtery exploits on the stage of Drury Lane Theatre.

The proofs, too, (in my hands) that a certain member of the present Cabinet derives much of his income from the profits of a brothel, lend a certain solidity to my position.

This lion can bite back.

CHRISTIANITY

But why—we may indeed ask—all this heavy metal to bombard a brothel? Has no good thing come out of Nazareth?

It is in a way extremely trying to live in a world where connotation varies so wildly.

The Sicilian peasant who can roar with laughter at some blasphemous obscenity of his village priest while preserving his devotion to the deities satirized, will justly be astonished and disgusted with me. He will hardly credit that anyone can take deities so seriously as to do anyone an injury on their behalf. He is at heart a Pagan; Mary is his mistress and Jesus his "Bambino", and he loves to play with them in the woods where the sunlight traces its faint fan-patterns among the leaves.

The idea of a Jesus who objected to people playing on a Sunday—who insisted on being worshipped in a silk hat and frock coat, who couldn't stand people obtaining refreshment after 12.30—well, it never struck him, that's all!

So when I go wandering among country-side Catholics I am nearly as happy in their simple worship as I am with the grander and austerer conceptions of Mohammed. But England! The people have materialized their God into a Parish Councilor, at the best; at the worst, he has been made the excuse for every crime.

The prevalence of syphilis in the Indian army has increased from 8% to 80% lest God should be shocked by our unholy recognition of the human nature of the human soldier.

It is useless to multiply examples. All I wish to do is to justify my agreement with Shelley and Nietzsche in defining Christianity as the religious expression of the slave-spirit in man.

I do not wish to argue that the doctrines of Jesus, they and they alone, have degraded the world to its present condition. I take it that Christianity is not only the cause but the symptom of slavery. There were slaves in Rome, of course, even under the republic. But it was only through Paul that the slime found tongue, and uttered its agony and blasphemy. Now, through the steady growth of altruism pari-passu with the Gospel that advocates it, the world is come to such a pass that the canaille is throned.

The Old Age Pensions folly, which is simply the official seal upon the survival of the unfittest, a check to honest ambition, a playing into the hands of the unskilful and the vicious, all of those (in short) whom a healthy organism crushes as the first condition of its well-being, is so "popular" that of all the House of Commons, the majority of whom see as plainly as I do how things stand, barely 1% are found to oppose it root and branch, and they from constituencies which the act will hardly touch, while the Lords—our bulwark, oh God! and what a fortress is that whose semi-lunes are Lord Townshend and Lord Tankerville!—pass the bill with scarce a protest. We are to be taxed beyond endurance, our defences neglected, our education left to sink or swim as it may, that our whole state may be clogged with its own excrement! It is no idle boast of the vermin socialists that their system is Christianity, and no other is genuine. And look at them! to a man—or rather to a Tetragrammaton which is a Temurah of T. H. I. S.—they are atheists and in favour of Free Love—whatever that may mean. I have talked with many Socialists, but never with one who understood his

subject. Empty babblers they are, muddle-headed philanthropists. They read a shilling abridgement of John Stuart Mill, and settle all economic problems over a "sirloin of turnips" in some filthy crank food dive. Ask them any simple question about detail, and the bubble is pricked.

Well, as I was saying, they are all in favour of "Free Love." Some paper mentioned the fact. What a stampede! Oh no! not me, please sir, it was the other boy. It would never do to shock the British public.

If I exclude Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells from these strictures, it is because Shaw is simply a masturbating monkey, and Wells a satirist playing at castles on his Sandgate sands.

So, then, it is Christianity considered as slavishness, as fear of all sorts, as altruism—that exquisite refinement of fear which we call sympathy—that I condemn. It is because we are afraid of death that the death of others affects us, except of course in the case of bereavement.

Just look at your Christian when he gets his modicum of manhood. He will not take the manly way, because (*a*) he is afraid of hurting the modesty of the poor girl (who is simply aching for him); (*b*) he is afraid of catching some disease: (*c*) he might get her into trouble; (*d*) what will the neighbours say?; (*e*) suppose she said no, what a fool I should look!; (*f*) God said I musn't. And so on through the alphabet of cowardice.

Look at your Christian as he sits down to dinner.

He won't eat melon because the weather is hot, and he might get cholera; mutton? think of the poor sheep! potatoes? bad for his fat; artichoke? bad for his gout. Tomatoes? cause of cancer. Wine? the great curse of our day, my dear sir. Milk? a mere mass of tubercle bacilli. Water? Typhoid! do you want to poison me, my dear

friend? Beer? Well, perhaps a little beer—for he has shares in a brewery.

You have already seen how this awful fear of nature and of God is twisted into an engine of oppression and torture against any one who declines to grovel and cringe before their filthy fetish.

It is obvious that cowardice is the cause of cruelty: the brave man strikes a strenuous blow, and all is over; the coward brought to bay snarls and strikes in desperation, and if by chance the blow goes home, he jumps on and mutilates and insults his victim.

Of course all this insane Christianity has produced its own toxin. Our prudery goes hand in hand with the most disgusting system of prostitution in the world, and our Theatres (too pure for that corrupter Sophocles) are disgraced by the most senseless and witless legshows. Our praise of poverty has produced the worst poor-laws in civilization; our democracy has perfected a snobbery which would make Thackeray stare with surprise. Queen Victoria the Good—what a washerwoman lost to mankind! was the French nation's epitaph upon her—drove the last nail into the coffin of art in England. Though 'twas needless cruelty: whom have we had of the first rank in England since Elizabeth but the Revolutionaries? Blake, Shelley, Keats, Coleridge, Byron, Swinburne, Swift, Butler, Milton, every one exiled, starved, bullied, driven insane; except Milton, whose supreme hypocrisy saved him, as it damned the nation for ever. Anyhow, bad as it was, Victoria made it worse, and, under a queen with a high-necked collar, it is left for me to unite in myself all the blare of all the trumpets. Call me Israfel, last of the angels, and let the dead rise from their tombs!

I therefore hold the legendary Jesus in no wise responsible for the trouble: it began with Luther, perhaps, and went on with Wesley: but no mat-

ter!—what I am trying to get at is the religion which makes England to-day a hell for any man who cares at all for freedom. That religion they call Christianity; the devil they honour they call God. I accept these definitions, as a poet must do, if he is to be at all intelligible to his age, and it is their God and their religion that I hate and will destroy.

THE POEM ITSELF

I should really leave this to my friend Captain Fuller to dissect at his leisure, that he might by-and-bye edify the public in a little monograph of say 350,000 words. But it seems to me important to explain the form to a reader before he begins. For the work so transcends my own critical faculties that I am sure others will find difficulty in getting my point of view without very serious attention.

In the first place, my predecessor Shelley was so naturally gentle that his Prometheus can be read to-day by our young ladies without their ever suspecting that he was getting at God.

Nietzsche on the other hand is very obscure, very superficial, very philosophical, and he did not write English.

I have been trained in a harder school than Shelley; and so my little finger is thicker than my father's loins. He went and "trode the glaciers of the Alps"—the Mer de Glace; I broke the record by my 68 days on the Baltoro glacier. He went out in a boat, and got drowned at that; I have travelled on the Bralduh in a Zak. He shrank from the sight of a butcher's shop; I followed wounded buffalo into the jungle on foot. He thought Indians were "mild"; I shot two Bengalis. He never had such a galaxy of imbecility before him as R. J. Campbell, Winnington-Ingram, Tolstoi, Bernard Vaughan, Torrey, Dowie, Bernard Shaw, Booth, Father Ignatius, and my Uncle Tom.

He had not read the Encyclical against Modernism; the religious essays of the Right Hon. W. E.

Gladstone, and the preposterous Balfour. He was unfamiliar with the spermatorrhoea of Tennyson's thought, and the diarrhoea of its simulacrum in G. K. Chesterton.

This explains why Shelley's wholesome indignation appears in me as little less than a blind lust of Destruction. (That is to say, on the rare occasion when I so far fall from adeptship as to credit the evidence of my senses).

I have consequently done all I can to shock and hurt the enemy. I have painted their God as the obscene thing he is from my knowledge of my Uncle Tom; I have made his Trinity ridiculous and his scheme disgusting; I have painted Magdalen as the Syrian strumpet she was from the best models among English society whores (thank you, Ada; thank you, Kathleen!); I have painted Mary as a lascivious flapper from my knowledge of English virgins—thank you, Vera! thank you, Lydia! thank you, Millicent!—the hag is my mother-in-law, and the baboon the Reverend F. F. Kelly. I cannot pretend to remember exactly who 'sat' for the ox and the ass, though the names of Charles Watts and Joseph Mc. Cabe somehow instinctively suggest themselves in this connection. The satyr and nymph crowd are mostly painted from imagination, for on my honour I hardly know so many decent people; I painted Jesus first as a joke—the brass bottle of our braying clergy; I developed him as a low class Jew [not knowing any South African millionnaires I took him straight out of the Gospel] and lastly I miraculously turned him into a real man, chiefly out of compliment to the distinguished fictionist Ernest Renan. In other words, I have kept as close to my documents as any one has any reason to expect.

With regard to the plot, I must ask my readers to believe in the existence of a great magical broth-

erhood formal or informal pledged to the guardianship of mankind.

With this postulate the way is clear.

In the prologue we find innocence: Pagan love, Pagan music, Pagan mysticism, and we find the Sabbatarians pretty sick about it, like the fox that lost his tail.

We next find Alexander, one of the guardians, anxious about humanity. He is not squeamish about a little blood, his own or another's, and he discovers the plot.

Next we find the dove achieving his foul purpose, not on a pure laughing Pagan girl, but on a furtive lecherous girl, already half a Christian. Enough of this painful subject!

Now comes the Nativity, with the guardians, under Alexander's presidency, on the watch. They are perfectly indifferent to all but the secret purpose—more magical ethics, my disciples! They are moved neither to pity nor to disgust, for the Great Pity and the Great Disgust have moved them to this Immobility.

Next we see love under Christianity, as guilt, disease, weariness; and the half-man rotten by its revolting filth, consenting to the ruin of mankind and his own death as relief from it.

Lastly we see the man magically awakened to a sense of his disaster, too weak to retrieve the past or avert the future, though alive to all its horror. In the meanwhile the corruption of Roman virtue begins; and we should end the play in despair were it not that Alexander comes forward and obligingly prophesies the arrival of Aleister Crowley—the Saviour of the Earth. So that the reader need only turn back to the title-page to see that the Light hath indeed arisen in the darkness.

THE ENGLISH SPIRIT

It was in my mind to discourse freely upon this engaging topic; but to say truth I am somewhat weary, having now written for some six hours, and being well assured that if I once laid down the pen nothing would persuade me to resume the distasteful task. For there is no ecstasy in argument and exposition as there is in Poetry. That is why journalists are such dull dogs, even when they start as brilliant men. My readers, too, may be weary. They may say to me, as Lord Tankerville said to me at eleven A. M. on the 7th of July 1907 "I'm sick of your teaching—teaching—teaching—as if you were God Almighty and I were a poor bloody shit in the street!"—

I could not blame them.

On the whole, too, I cannot see that I have left much unsaid in the proem—which was written long ago when I lived, as will be obvious from the style, in Paddington. I will therefore beg my readers to proceed to the same and thence to the work itself; and leave the Bal Bullier and his Dorothy to their glad work of restoring the victim of British stupidity—else why these miles of preface?—weary Aleister Crowley, to his Pagan rapture.

PROEM

Master, I come, but ere the pregnant gloom
Lighten at last, I ask myself for whom
I take the pen, since English throbs and glows
Forth from its gold, like streams from sunny snows.
And if I write for England, who will read?
As if, when moons of Ramazan recede,
Some fatuous angel-porter should deposit
His perfect wine within the privy closet!
“What do they know, who only England know?”
Only what England paints its face to show.
Love mummied and relabelled “chaste affection,”
And lust excused as “natural selection.”
Caligula upbraids the cruel cabby,
And Nero birches choir-boys in the Abbey;
Semiramis sandpapered to a simper,
And Clytemaestra whittled to a whimper!
The austerities of Loyola? to seek!
But—let us have a “self-denial week!”
The raptures of Teresa are hysteric,
But—let us giggle at some fulsome cleric!
“The age refines! You lag behind.” God knows!
Plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose.
That Crowley knows you as you are—that fret.
He buys not doctored dung for violets!
Your smug content, your Puritan surprise,
All lies, and lies; all lies, and lies, and lies!
Pathics from Eton, ever on their knees,
Amazed at their twin brothers the Chinese!
Pathics from Harrow, reeking of Patchouli,
Shocked at the vice of the Mongolian coolie!
Canons of Westminster, with boy-rape sterile,
Hope Christ may save us from the Yellow Peril!

To call forced labour slavery is rude,
 "Terminologic inexactitude."
 This from the masters of the winds and waves
 Whose cotton-mills are crammed with British slaves!
 Men pass their nights with German-Jewish whores,
 Their days in keeping "aliens" from our shores.
 They turn their eyes up at a Gautier's tale,
 And run a maisonette in Maida Vale.
 Murder poor Wakley—the assassin leaves
 Escorted by the Yard's blackmailing thieves,
 Lest dead men (or their papers) should tell tales
 And maybe compromise the Prince of Wales.
 Arrest poor Wilde—the creaking Channel tubs
 Groan with the consternation of the Clubs.
 Scared, hushed, and pale, our men of eminence
 Wait the result in sickening suspense.
 Announced, all Mayfair shrieks its decent joy;
 And, feeling safe, goes out and hires a boy.
 Your titles—oh! how proud you are to wear them?
 —What about "homo quatuor literarum?"
 The puissant all their time to vice devote;
 The impotent (contented) pay to gloat.
 The strumpet's carwheels splash the starving maiden
 In Piccadilly, deadlier than Aden.
 "England expects a man to do his duty."
 He calls truth lies, and sneers at youth and beauty,
 Pays cash for love and fancies he has won it—
 Duty means church, where he thanks God he's done it!
 Morley's Hotel is the one stance to see
 Our Nelson from!—Oh God! that I should be
 Alone among this slime!—I saw Thy Graal:
 Show me the men that have not bowed to Baal!
 For as I love with spirit and with sense
 I nauseate at this crawling crapulence,
 Our whole state, summed in one supreme enigma,
 Solved (in a second) by a simple Σ
 Monstrous conjunctions with black man and brute
 Level our ladies with the prostitute:
 Our spinsters chaste in criminal abortion,
 And matrons with the pox for marriage portion;

Husbands who pimp all day for their young wives,
 Athletes from Oxford, pathic all their lives,
 Who sport the "so" coat, the sotadic necktie,
 And lisp their filthy pun "Mens conscia recti!"
 Priest who are celibates—outside the choir!
 Maidens who rave in Lesbian desire :
 The buck of sixty, cunning as a trapper,
 Stalking the pig-tailed, masturbating flapper ;
 The creeping Jesus—Caution! we may shock it!
 With one hand through his torn-out breeches pocket ;
 Flagellates shrieking in our streets and schools,
 Our men all hogs, and all our women ghouls :
 This is our England, pious dame and prude,
 Who calls me blasphemous, unchaste, and rude!

Come to sweet air, poor sirens of the stews!
 A pox on all these yammering Yahoos!
 My healthy sperm begets the Son of God
 Winged with the dawn and with the star-stream shod!
 Not on your purulence and ichorous itch,
 O English girl, half baby and half bitch,
 But on the glorious body and soul of her
 Of whom I am the Lord and worshipper,
 The brave gay cleanly maiden whose embrace
 Flushes with shameless fervour the fair face,
 Fills the whole leaping heaven with the light
 Till all the world is drunken with delight.

You with your own authentic filth defiled
 Robbed Keats of life, and Shelley of his child,
 Corrupted Swinburne to your foul disease,
 Denied Blake bread—are you fed full on these?
 You hate the wise, true, beautiful, and holy:—
 Dogs! is there nothing you can do to Crowley?

Therefore I see and speak, who would be dumb
 And blind: but Thou dost call. Master, I come,

THE PERSONS OF THE PROLOGUE

SATYRS MEN

Marsyas Anaximander

Silenus Lysander

Chiron Anaxagoras

NYMPHS HERMAPHRODITES

Chrysis Rhodon

Doris Salmacis

Atthis Erotion

GIRLS FAUNS

Rhodope Heliorus

Erinna Hyacinthus

Evadne Olympas

YOUNG BOYS

Antinous

Giton

Hylas

OTHERS

Heracleitus, *a philosopher*

Chrysippus, *his disciple*

Yaugh Waugh, *a man vulture*

A lambkin

A dove

THE PERSONS OF THE TRAGEDY

Alexander, *a wise king, ruling Macedon, Babylonia, etc.*

Two Satyrs

A fair man child

Two nymphs

Miriam, a Syrian Girl

A white robed youth

Legions of apes, worms, and monsters

Agrippa, *a Roman Century*

Publis, *his lieutenant*

A Roman guard

A hag

A blue faced baboon

An ox

Zakariah, *an ass*

Govinda, *king of the Indines*

Chau, Son of Heaven, *king of Tartary and China*

A company of rats

A company of toads

A brass bottle containing a mannikin in blue

Issa, the grown man thereof

Magda, an odalisque

John, a young scribe

Bystanders

PROLOGUE

THE GARDEN OF EROS

See, in a glade of green moss, watered by a spring, a merry company languidly playing. Flutes, and harps, and panpipes are there; and on wonderful chased silver, figured with the loves of the gods, are cups of beaded wine, and fruits, and honey, and cakes of divers sort. It is night, but the moon is exceeding bright; and the stars shine in the self-luminous blue of the vault. Around the glade are many trees; the ground is a mass of flowers, and gathered roses cover the white limbs of many of the players. One girl is standing, and a full nightingale song trills from the players, a vulture vast and vague in his black night of shadow. His face is human, of the ovine type, as that of a low-class Jew. He watches the scene throughout in silence, but with intense envy disguised as disgust.

DORIS

Praise the wine wittily!
Praise the wine well!
Footing it prettily
Down through the dell.

Are there not playmates
Enough and to spare,
Gallant and gay to spare,
Each one of us fair?

Bountiful measures of
 Beautiful wine :
 Infinite treasures of
 Bacchus divine !
 Hail to the Lord of us !
 Blithe is his reign.
 Be thou adored of us,
 Soul without stain !

Fair are the faces, and
 Limbs of us light,
 Tracing the paces, and
 Drunk with delight.
 Io ! let us tremble in
 Trance of the tune
 Here that assemble in
 Joyaunce of June !

ATTHIS

Doris, our darling ! How subtle and sweet
 The throb of thy throat to the flit of our feet !
 Come, I have chosen thee.

DORIS

Follow me then
 Deep in the dance to the heart of the glen !

MARSYAS

Ho ! you are rich, you are red, you are ripe !
 Pace me your passions to plaint of my pipe !

OLYMPAS

Nay, I am with thee, my master, to match
 Every my song to thy lyrical catch.

EROTION

Nay, let us follow you—all in a ring !
 Wonder of wisdom and wit on the wing !

ANAXIMANDER

Come, my Giton, of the hyacinth hair!
Apollo, Apollo! indeed they are fair!

HYLAS

Kiss me again, my Lysander, my love!
Listen! Olympas is singing above.

LYSANDER

Ah! but Erotion beckons me yonder!
Beautiful curls on her bosom that wander
Tempt me to folly.

HYLAS

Indeed, let us press
The exquisite doubt in a certain Lysander

LYSANDER

Even as the feet of the maid on the grapes
Crush the wine of delight from ambiguous shapes!

OLYMPAS

Shrill, shrill the never-cloying
Thirst of maid's enthusiasm!
Atthis with her Doris toying
In the moonlight filled with laughter,
Wrestling, kissing—follow after
To the summit of the spasm!

CHIRON

Ho, shall we sit idle gazing
On such beauty spirit-crazing?
No, my ladies, I'm the song!

ATTHIS

We can sing you!

DORIS

Sweet and strong!

ANAXAGORAS

Laughter, laughter! I'm for thee,
Doris of the blue-black tresses!
Mine are musical caresses
Like the murmur of the sea.

HYCINTHOS

Chiron, shall we dance with these
Under the acacia trees?

CHIRON

Yes, if Rhodon there will lend us

Her red fleece-like sunset glowing,
With the doubtful venture showing
Where-what God shall there befriend us?

RHODON

Mocker! I shall come. Beware
Lest my manhood match you there!

SILENUS

Ha, you rogue, if Rhodon rage,
Poets earn a cynic page;
And our lips with laughter curl
If she treat you as a girl.

CHIRON

Brute, get back to wine, and leave us
In our flower-love to inweave us.
All we know the shameless chorus:
"Fie! Silenus-Heliorus!"

HELIORUS

I had better right to mock you,
Graceless Chiron, with the quip
(Girls, come close—the jest will shock you)
"Pine-tree with the drooping tip!"

CHIRON

Oh, you little toad of spite!
Come, and I will set you right.
All your years of wantonness
Shall not save you much distress.

HELIORUS

Yes—the pain I had before.
“At the game that Chiron shouldn’t,
Chiron would—and Chiron couldn’t”

RHODON

Never heed the little whore!
Play a melody, Marsyas!

HELIORUS

He’s at Anaxagoras!

RHODOPE

Where is Doris, then?

ERRINNA

Where her ribs are all in use!

By Zeus,

ANTINOUS

Sprinkle me with poppy-juice
From the flowers of Syracuse
On the lips relaxed with pleasure
Of their kisses overmeasure!

Let them suck the heavenly sleep!
Let me sink into the deep!
Till the morning pale and fresh
Find my flesh against his flesh,
And mine eyes within his eyes
Watch the sun of glory rise!

All my breath is like new wine.
 I have flaxen hair and fine.
 From my shoulders to my feet
 Like the sunlight in the wheat!
 If I laugh, the moon-curved pearls
 Match and master any weep,
 If I weep, as joy may weep,
 One would say the fountain-steep
 Of Dione dropped its dew
 Through the vivid veil of blue.

I am limber like a snake.
 I am soft, and slow to slake—
 For a curling, crimson fire
 Floods my lips and feeds desire.
 I am passionate and pale;
 Virile—and most faery frail.

 All diverse delights are mine.
 Kiss within me, and combine
 To a languorous lyric lure
 Sweet as pleasure, and as sure!

SILENUS

Tut, my lad, you do not mention
 Modesty.

ANTINOUS

'Twas mine intention,
 But those loose lips wine-corrupt
 Always itch to interrupt!

SILENUS

Nay, boy, all the song was true.
 Come and frisk it once together!
 Ah, the goodly Grecian Weather!
 Ah, the heavenly haze of blue,
 That must set an azure frame
 Round the flaxen locks aflame!

CHRYSIS

Come, Evadne, let us fling
Flowers upon them gambolling!

EVADNE

Chrysis! could one weary of
All thine opulence of love?

CHRYSIS

I am fair; I cannot fear.
Was my tongue too eager, dear?

EVADNE

Never, never, never! Here,
Coil the roses close, a cluster
In the flax, the lyric lustre!

CHRYSIS

In the white waves that carouse
On the satyr's beetle brows,
Plait a wreath of laurustine
With the broad leaves of the vine!

SALMACIS

Sweet Lysander, now thou knowest
All the oracle obscure!

LYSANDER

In my soul—my soul!—thou flowest
Suave and sibylline and sure.
O the stream I launched this boat on!
O the pool my fancies float on!
I am drowned in bays of bliss—
Salmacis!—my Salmacis!

HYACINTHOS

Heliorus, siren!
I have overmatched thee now;
From the bag of Chiron
Drawn a luckier lot than thou!

SILENUS

Come, we have dallied long enough
 With music and with love.
 Set to the wine, and slide.
 Each twined like vines, fair boy, fair bride,
 Down the long glade of sleep,
 At the sun's summoning.
 We shall be carolling, upon the steep,
 The happy dawn's return.
 We shall wake—and bathe—and burn.

EROTION

Now the drowsy Lord unloose
 All his store of poppy-juice!
 To the murmurous bell-clear fret
 of the tremulous rivulet
 Let us lisp the lullaby
 Of Arcady—in Arcady!

Me ye know, the dazzling dream
 Of the swimmer in the stream.
 Boy to girl and maid to man,
 Mine are all joys of Pan.
 Chrysis seeks the darling dove,
 Gets the eagle to her love.
 Hylas, trembling towards the pine,
 Finds the soft voluptuous vine.

RHODOPE

Curl ye close! Curl ye close!
 Fold your petals like the rose!
 All the satyr's lust of limb;
 All the delicate and slim
 Slenderness of laughing faun
 Twine like serpents on the lawn;

All the boy's undulant grace
 To the nymph's fantastic face;
 All the maiden's chaste delight

To the flushed hermaphrodite ;
While the balanced strength of man
Bears its witness unto Pan.

CHRYSIS

Ah, the purple vein that glows
Through the eyelids as they close !
Hush ! the breeze that fans the fern
Bids the midnight moon to turn.
We must sleep
Soft and deep :
We must wake—and bathe—and burn.

*(The company being asleep, fallen lax in
mid-caress, there enter a Philosopher
Heracleitus and his Disciple Chrysippus.)*

HERACLEITUS

Look, my darling, and confess
Life one flame of loveliness !

CHRYSIPPUS

Master ! Master ! How fairy fond
Is yonder maid like a lily-frond !

Let us lie on the moss by the spring, let us share
In their silence serene, the languor rare !
So goodly a company.

HERACLITUS

Wait but a moment—stand apart,
Revolving the light in thine innermost heart !
Content not the soul with the skin of the grape !
But the truer sense than the eye and the ear
Make to appear !

CHRYSIPPUS

Verily, master, I obey.
I travel the exalted way.

I pierce the sense ; I gain the goal,
Distill the essence of the soul—

HERACLEITUS

I shroud thee in the web of wool.
I lift the burden of the bull.
Lion and eagle! dart ye forth
Into the cold clime of the North,

Where past the star points the pole
Rest the unstirred axis of the soul.

CHRYSIPPUS

Hear then! By Abrasax! the bar
Of the unshifting star
Is broken—Io! Asar!
My spirit is wrapt in the wind of light ;
It is whirled away on the wings of night,
Sable-plumed are the wonderful wings,
But the silver of moonlight subtly springs
Into the feathers that flash with the pace

Of our flight to the violate bounds of space.
Time is dropt like a stone from the stars :
Space is a chaos of broken bars :
Being is merged in a furious flood
That rages and hisses and foams in the blood.
See! I am dead! I am passed, I am passed
Out of the sensible world at-last.
I am not. Yet I am, as I never was,
A drop in the sphere of molten glass
Whose radiance changes and shifts and drapes
The infinite soul in finite shapes.
There is light, there is life, there is love, there is sense
Beyond speech, beyond song, beyond evidence.
There is wonder intense, a miraculous sun,
As the many are molten and mixed into one
With the heat of its passion ; the one hath invaded
The heights of its soul, and its laughter is braided

With comets whose plumes are the galaxies
 Like winds on the night's inaccessible seas.
 Oh master! my master! nay, bid me not ride
 To the heaven beyond heaven; for I may not abide.
 I faint: I am frail: not a mortal may bear
 The invisible light, the abundance of air.
 I fail: I am sinking: O Thou, be my friend!
 Bear me up! Bear me up! Bear me up to the end!
 Now! Now! In the heart of the bliss beyond being
 The None is involved in the One that, unseeing,

Dashes its infinite splendour to death
 Beyond light, beyond love, beyond thought, beyond breath.
 Ah! but my master! the death of the sun—
 Break, break, the last veil! It is done—It is done,

(He falls, as one dead, upon the grass.)

HERACLEITUS

I bless these happy virgins, souls unstained,
 Through whose delight my darling hath attained

Even to the uttermost silence that may be
 Even in this vast circuit of eternity.
 So, o my golden charioteer, I creep
 Into thine arms, and dream the dream of sleep.

*(He sleeps. Upon the still beauty descends
 from his tree the man-vulture.)*

THE VULTURE

Yaugh Waugh!
 Butch! this is terrible
 That all these people should be happy—Pss!—
 Without a thought of Me!
 Ga! Ga! the plague
 Rot them in hell!
 Cramp! Ague! Pox! Gout! Stone—Hoo!
 What shall I do to stop it?

It's sin—sin—sin. I hate them. Oog!
 I want them to go groaning
 Over imaginary ills
 With white eyes twisted up to Me,
 Where I sit and croak
 And snarl! Ugh! Faugh!
 I'm Yaugh Waugh!
 I'm Yaugh Waugh!

Ga! Oa! Hoo! Hoo!
 Scratch!
 I must invent a plan
 To ruin all this gladness.
 Ha! Plup! I have it.
 There's nothing here
 That would accept my favours—

Uck! Bulch!—
 So I'll abuse myself to chaos
 And see what comes of it.
 Ha—Ba! Ha—Ba!
 Ab—ab—ab—ab—ab!
 Utch—what is this?
 Coagulated yolk of the addled egg
 Of chaos! Hatch it out!
 That's why I AM. Hoo—hoo—hoo—hoo—hoo!
 Oh!—now the white of the old egg is curled
 Into a ragged fleece.
 Ga! Ga! I've got a son:
 What will it be?
 O heaven—a lamb!
 I'm Yaugh Waugh, Yaugh Waugh.
 I'll call it Yaugh Shaugh Waugh.
 Good! Can you talk,
 First born?—I'll never have another,
 I'm Yaugh Waugh, Yaugh Waugh.
 Bow to me, you lumpy lambkin!
 Haw! Haw! Haw!
 Now at last a wooden thing

That will do my business for me.
 Uck! Uck! The morning's carrion
 Bubbles in my paunch.
 I am belching dreadfully.
 What? Uck? Uck? How strange!
 For the windy vomit of me
 Shapes itself into a sorry
 And bedraggled pigeon.
 Birdie, have you got religion?
 Yes, he bows most properly.
 Come then, let us take our counsel
 How to stop this sad behaviour,
 This gross impropriety,
 Irreligion—Uck! it's awful.
 Squat, then! Pigeon, you're the youngest:
 You speak first.

THE DOVE

Almighty father!
 I have magnificent
 And sublime and noble scheme.
 Listen! I will find a woman—

THE VULTURE

Oh! you dirty-minded rascal!

THE DOVE

Wait a moment—I will do it.
 Find a virgin—if I can,
 And on her beget this lambkin
 In the image of a man.

THE VULTURE

That seems complicated, pigeon.
 We've the lamb begotten here.

THE DOVE

Yes, I know; it seems absurd;
 But in practice I am certain
 It will work out splendidly.

THE VULTURE

Well, proceed!

THE DOVE

Of course I will;

I'm accustomed to "proceeding."
Let the lamb grow up to manhood
Then we'll have him whipped and tortured
And eventually killed.

THE VULTURE

That sounds lovely.

THE LAMB

Do you think so?

I record my vote against it.

THE DOVE

Stupid! in a day or so
We will have you rise again.

THE LAMB

Really! I may be a dullard;
But I cannot see the point
Of this most elaborate nonsense.

THE DOVE

Well, you will. We'll make a rule
That anyone who disbelieves it
Shall be strictly prosecuted
—With the utmost rigour
Of the majesty of law.

THE LAMB

And if any fool believes it—

THE DOVE

He shall come to live with Us.
What a privilege!

THE VULTURE

Provided

He observe propriety,
Never laugh, never dance,
Never do the dreadful thing!

THE DOVE

Precisely so!

THE VULTURE

It's settled then,
Charmingly unanimously
Carried by a show of wings.

THE LAMB

I protest.

THE VULTURE

You did not vote.

THE LAMB

If I had a pair of wings—

THE DOVE

You might fly; and so might pigs!

THE VULTURE

Pray, sir, do not mention pigs!
Gru—utch! Scheme approved, and entered in
The Minutes. I declare the board
Quite indefinitely adjourned.

THE LAMB

I oppose; I wish to enter
A minority report.

THE VULTURE

You are out of order, sir.

THE LAMB

I shall get my own back later
In the Theatres of London
Where a show of legs decides.

THE DOVE

By the way—

THE VULTURE

These sleeping women
Are no good to us, of course?

THE DOVE

No indeed! I want a creature
Very different to that,

THE VULTURE

Well, you'll have a job to find one.

THE DOVE

Would you lend me your red star?

THE VULTURE

With the greatest pleasure, pigeon!

THE DOVE

I'll be off, then.

THE LAMB

So will I.

THE VULTURE

I shall know where I can find you.

THE LAMB

Would you had a moment's patience!
I had a much better scheme
—One involving pigeon-pie!

THE VULTURE

Butch! be off with you. I'll hop
 Up again to the tree-top.
 Yaugh Waugh! That's me!
 Always at the top of the tree!

*(They depart separately, yet together. The
 old Philosopher wakes).*

HERACLEITUS

Ah! but some evil things have brooded here
 Over the sleepers. May it be indeed
 The truth that some strange fate threatens the world?
 That Art and Love and Beauty, to renew
 Their glory, must be bathed in their own blood?
 But who shall understand the Soul of Pan?
 Involved in All and still apart from All!
 For steeped therein as I am all my life,
 I know but exquisite beatitude,
 Knowing the whole, Then who shall know or care
 What may befall the part? One must remain;
 Many must change. Then all is well. The strife
 Is but the ferment of the forward still
 Immune from grief, intolerant of ill,
 Fronting the double foe—of pain and joy—
 With equal eye—in the meantime—

Dear boy,

Wake! Let us revel it the while we may,
 Love dawning ever with the dawning day.
 Wake, brothers, sisters! It is time to stir.
 The owl, the night-hawk, sad and sinister,

Have fled, The first flush animates the hills,
 Reddens the rushes, flashes on the rills.
 Come while the breeze blows and the air is cool
 Down through the forest to the Fairies' pool.

(All rise and follow the sage, singing:)

THE COMPANY

Praise Eros wittily!
 Praise Eros well!
 Tripping it prettily
 Down through the dell!
 Joyous and eager
 Our tresses adorning,
 Away to beleaguer
 The city of morning!

Away to the leap to
 The soft-smiling pool
 Whose kisses shall creep to
 Us virginal cool!
 Race and bescatter
 The dew in the grass;
 The nymph and her satyr!
 The lad and his lass!

O blest is the laughter
 Of Arcady's groves
 That chases us after
 To delicate loves,
 The frolics, the fancies,
 The fires, the desires,
 The dives and the dances,
 The lutes and the lyres!

Follow, o follow,
 Sweet seed of the sun!
 Through the wood, through the hollow,
 The race is begun
 That shall fill the day up
 With the roses of pleasure,
 The rod—and the cup—
 And the crown of our treasure!

Sweet are our voices ;
Our bodies are bare ;
Their spirit rejoices
Afloat in the air,
Coiling and curling
In maze of æons
Its vision unfurling
A pageant of pæans !

Blessed be Love in his
Palace of praise
Whom we follow above in his
Wonderful ways !
Whom we follow above
To the stars and the snows,
Immaculate Love !—
We adore thee, Eros !

Praise Eros wittily !
Praise Eros well !
Tripping it prettily
Down through the dell !
Joyous and eager
Our tresses adoring,
Away to beleaguer
The city of morning !

I

THE RED STAR

I

THE RED STAR

SCENE.—A grove of ilex in Arcadia. The terrace is of white marble. In the centre an image of the god Pan in Ivory and Gold. The pedestal is of lapis-lazuli, the space around of malachite. It is strewn with red roses. Before the image of the god stands a naked man, in whose hand is a sharp sword heavy and curved. Its blade is of blue steel, its hilt encrusted with rubies. The man is come to his full strength; he is very dark with deep-set glittering eyes of green flecked with fire. His beard is short, square, curly, and black mingled with red. It is noon; the sun stands sole and supreme in the abyss of azure. The grove is completely hidden from the outer world by its ilex, and by the dark fastnesses of yew and cypress about it.

The man—Alexander, the great king—stands upright, facing the God, his arms raised as if to smite with the sword.

ALEXANDER

Naked I stand
In the Garden of Pan.
Bare is the brand
That maketh a man.
The saying is said;
The doing is done;
Bare is mine head
To the fire of the sun.
But thou, o my Lord, are quiet and still;
And the feathers are clipt from the wings of the will.

Still are thy lips
And void of motion,
Like red-sailed ships
On a windless ocean?
Hast thou no lust
To involve in a curse
The insane dust
Of the universe?
Speak, o my Lord! I have journeyed afar
In the wake of the terrible crimson star.

A harp between mine hands,
Murmurous and musical,
I come from far-off lands
To seek Thee who are All.
Amid my warrior bands
I rode in kingly wise:
Thy light upon mine eyes!

I came from very far
Led by that strange red star
At noon that fadeth now
Dim on the snow-crowned brow
Of royal Caucasus,
A mystical portent
Of some obscure event
Darkly miraculous
Written below the West
In Fate's dark palimpsest;
Obscure—the sun to eclipse!

I fed my flaming lips
Upon the limbs of slaves,
Great Nubian girls that bled
Upon the sands—so laves
The sun his fire in cloud
When the sea glows glassy red
At the buffet of the wind
On its cheek all wrinkle-lined.

Ah! thou Lord God! thus thrice
I made thy sacrifice.

Still thou art dumb,
Though I am duly come
Within thy secret grove
Naked and armless, save
For this seraphic glaive.
How then? What other price
May serve thy sacrifice?

Ah! by the evil glint
Of sun, portends an hint.
Shall I the childless king,
Chaste in thy praise, resign
That which was never mine,
The power of—spring?

Ay! by the fierce glad gleam
On thy dark lips, I see
Thy sober ecstasy
To watch the soft bright stream
Bubble and curl, like passion-flowers alight
On the seductive malachite,
To take with greedy joy
This—toy.
The jewels all-precious of a man
Waste death before thee—Pan!

Steady I stare
Into Thine eyes luxurious glare
Swimming with lust—as if I were
Some wandering Arab chief enthralled
By a sphinx with eyes of emerald,
As a bird fixed by an hissing asp,
As a maiden in a giant's grasp,
As a mariner caught in the viewless iron
And velvet vice of a singing siren!

I lift this blade to sheer
 In one deliberate sweep Of startling light
 All that man holdeth dear.
 From the sun's high steep to the great deep
 Of unimaginable night
 To dive—I dive.
 Lord, now!
 Pan! Pan!
 Accept the supreme vow!
 The man
 Shall be no more a man—
 Stay! who are these?

*(The stroke swings aside, as the pavement
 of malachite opens before him, at his feet,
 and two satyrs rise, with a little fair-
 haired child.)*

From what barbaric seas
 Ringing the icy North
 Thus suddenly sprung forth
 Come ye to mar mine—case?
 For I was nigh at peace
 With the great soul of things.

1ST SATYR

Hail, king of Kings!
 It is our Master's will
 That thou partake Of—this!
 So do the goat and snake
 Dance on the pavement of sapphire
 To the sound of the wind-haunted lyre.
 And the light of a lewd understanding
 Shines in them, and they lick their lips, and spill
 Slaver of the stars! Hail, king! With Him fulfil
 The sacrament of earth
 Imperiously commanding
 That leaps again to birth
 At the divided flood

Of sun and rain. Arise!
 The red gleam in thine eyes!
 Up, up and slay!

2ND SATYR

Fair child,

Laugh thou; God honours thee
 (Look! then, methinks, he smiled!)
 To condescend to bless
 That unripe loveliness.
 The acid of thine immaturity

Shall be a sharpness in his mouth
 Cloyed with too clinging sweet
 Of the full-bosomed South.

1ST SATYR

Beside those rose-fair feet
 Dimpled with fairy kisses
 There's no bright-tinted bird
 In all the blue abysses
 Worth even a plumeless word.

THE CHILD

I do not like this place.
 The god hath on harsh face.
 Take me home now!

ALEXANDER (*to the 1st satyr*)

What next?

How shall a babe scarce-sexed
 Avail when the dread offering
 Of the world's mightiest king
 Is not received?

1ST SATYR

Impale

You trembling fawn too frail
 Upon that ivory ruby rod

That juts from the azure throne of God!
 Then—as the scream chills the blue air,
 Draw the curved steel along
 The snow-pure throat! Hold the bright hair
 Firm in one swarthy grip;
 And ere the blood leap strong
 Suck with insensate lip
 That wine of Pan! Ah, drink!
 Great king—as if the brink
 Of Ganymede's own cup flowed over,
 And thou, his languid lover,
 Sank back into the arms of Zeus
 With thine head hanging loose,
 And the long curls adrip
 With the dew oozing from his lip.

ALEXANDER

So! unto Thee! Come hither,
 Child! You must pass before
 Unto the land where all flowers wither
 And the sea hath never a shore.

2ND SATYR

Ha! he hath dashed the babe to die,
 And caught his first convulsive sigh.
 With a fierce kiss biting into his lips,
 As a storm-fiend tears the reeling ships.
 His fingers clutch the golden hair.
 The head goes back, and the neck is bare.
 Now for the sweep of the steel!

1ST SATYR

Pan! Pan!

THE CHILD

Oh mamma! mamma!

2ND SATYR

Ha! what a man!

With a sweep he has severed the lamb-soft throat,
And the crimson blood in his cheeks afloat
Flames, an irradiate blaze to environ
Etna with mountains of molten iron.

ALEXANDER

Pan! o Pan! dissolve in bliss!
Take these severed lips to kiss!
Thou and I are partners of
This, the sacrament of love.
By the violate babe's blue eyes,
By his sucked-out arteries,
By the blood-bedabbled gold,
By the body void and cold,
Make me partner of thy power
Over this obscurest hour!

1ST SATYR

O the rich red blood that swims on
Over all the malachite!

2ND SATYR

Ah! the banquet gold and crimson
Like the sun afeast at night!

ALEXANDER

Out of the fume of the blood arise
Two lithe nymphs with amethyst eyes,
Sparkling with the wanton pleasure
That their small and laughing scarlet
Mouths betrayed, as overmeasure
Bubbled out the dancing harlot
Music of them, snaky slim,
Panther-smooth and light of limb
Wreathed with wealth of mystic berry,
As they leap, divinely drunken
On the very blood that gat them,
Insolent and lewd and merry—
With the satyr-eyes deep-sunken

Looking things prophetic at them!
 Ah! my pan, if blood suffice,
 Crush the world as in a vice!

1ST NYMPH

King of kings, the world shall bleed
 In the vilest vice of vices.

2ND NYMPH

While the riddle thou hast ree'd
 Mocks them with its "Blood suffices."

ALEXANDER

Know ye, bright ones, who I am?
 I have slain a thing adored
 At this altar to its Lord,
 As a butcher kills a lamb.

1ST NYMPH

That shall be—thou rightly fearest—
 Till the Balance weigh the Ram.

2ND NYMPH

Men shall even slay their dearest
 For the sake of that slain lamb.

ALEXANDER

He was softer than a dove;
 He was made for human love.
 I have given him for food
 To the lusty panic rood,
 And the obscure brotherhood.

1ST NYMPH

So the doves of men begotten
 Shall be plucked, and bruised, and rotten.

2ND NYMPH

So shall full-fed brothel-knaves

Kick them to indecent graves
In the name of the sweet Dove
That is God—for God is Love.

ALEXANDER

See ye naught but cruelty
In the infinite To-Be?
Look you, I have seen a star
Threatening pestilence or war
In the vault that hangs—a splash
Like a scar.

1ST NYMPH

From what a lash!

2ND NYMPH

O the monstrous travail—gape
In the belly of the sky!

1ST NYMPH

Shall the man beget the ape,
All the wine of time run dry?

2ND NYMPH

Ah! the grisly spoil of rape
Dark with vilest ecstasy!

1ST NYMPH

Listen, how shall life escape
From such death it breedeth by?

2ND NYMPH

Hangs there not a single grape
From that nightshade galaxy?

1ST NYMPH

Name the sharp accursed shape,
Stigma of its prodigy!

2ND NYMPH

Is it but a whirling storm ?

ALEXANDER

Nay! the star is cruciform.

1ST NYMPH

Thus the holy cross is cloven
 From Pan's purpose purple-woven.
 Even for centuries nine and ten,
 Life of women—death of men !
 In that sinister sad star
 Men shall bear the upright bar,
 Hanged for honesty and truth,
 Wisdom, courage, love, or youth.
 Women bear the cross-bar, living
 In the filth beyond believing.
 Svelte or buxom, fair or dark,
 Go to the maw of the greedy shark
 Whose lascivious appetite
 Is most swiftly set alight
 By their beauty or their wealth,
 By their passion or their weakness,
 In sheer lust of hate, it may be ;
 In the open or by stealth,
 By their slenderness or sleekness.
 For harlot worn and blubbing baby
 Nineteen centuries shall see
 Life run horizontally.

2ND NYMPH

Soul shall follow body's station.
 They shall cling to degradation,
 Dance to the clank of the chains that eat
 Deep ulcers in their fettered feet.
 Lock love the dove in a close cage,
 And loose the tiger marriage :
 To the camel of joy be a needle's eye,
 And a wolf's-throat to monogamy.

Youth's lusty god shall turn them sick,
While they dote on age's gilded stick.
Beauty shall shiver in the cold
While they warm their buttocks at the fire
Of lust and ugliness and gold,
The rank goats of the whorish mire.
So falls their flame to that decayed
Glow of wet rot in the wintry wood.
Ay! from this star disaster-rayed
A very wormwood draught is brewed:
The light of life shall shrink dismayed
At the dawn of prostitute and prude;
And the pagan glory fade
From the brows of womanhood.

1ST SATYR

But the boy shall thrust the maid
From the sunlight to the shade.
He shall make her passion good.

2ND SATYR

Nay! for all the world-decay
Rots from sapphirine to grey.
All the leprous lichen clings
Round the comeliness of things.
Brothers! Sisters! fauns and elves!
Dryads! Oreads! Undines!
Fairies, let us hide ourselves
In our innermost ravines
Inaccessible to man,
That our perfect peace in Pan
Hide from us the knowledge of
This eclipse of joy and love!

ALEXANDER

Is there nothing but distress
In the mystic vision lurking?

1ST NYMPH

Ah! but were thy loveliness
With the God supremely working!

ALEXANDER

Nymph, thy face is like a flower
Fairer than the driven foam!
Shining like an honeycomb
Is thy body—and thy soul
Shoots me to the gilded goal.
I shall master yet the hour.

SATYRS

King of Kings, we bow before Thee;
As our Master we adore Thee.
Grant us leave—the midmost wood
Calls us to its solitude.
We to bowers of flower and fern;
Thou to suffer—and to learn!

(They vanish, embracing the nymphs.)

ALEXANDER

I am alone
—With Pan—
With the cold stone.
Nay! with the riotous god that ran
Through all, and conquered all,
And became all, and now is all.
—Oh matchless musical
Seven-throated god, I hear thy stridency
Like nereids playing on the wind-struck sea
That heaves herself with sensuous swaying!

I have seen a wild girl woven in gold
Stained with blue and scarlet—playing
Before me—she transported me
With the writhings of her painted hips
And her belly jerking up to my lips,

Into an azure abyss of sea,
With the sun glittering amorously.
But now, o Pan, the whole world falls
With its reeling rout of Bacchanals
Into the gulf, and thy wild note
Shrills up from the black Nothing's throat
Like an enchanted harp that playeth
Melodies, melodies magniloquent of death.
Yea! o thou golden wan strange-smiling one,
Thou art not only cold.
Thine ivory came from fierce bull-elephants
That trampled Persians in their battle-rage ;
Thy gold was found by men most grave and sage
Among the sands of a strange river.
How my breast pants !
How my sides quiver !
Surely the breath of God is bubbling in
These veins, their blood that held its calm discourse
Lit with electric force
By Him for whom I have done sin,
Sin grievous against every part
To purge the whole through to the heart.
And lo! thine eyes that dazzle me
Like peacock's fans with many a million
Eyes of azure and vermilion
Each in its emerald pavilion
Like the death-god's majesty
Burning his ensanguine pain
In my blood, my heart, my brain.

Yea! with the scent of myrrh
And musk, and oliban, and strange perfumes
Begotten in pre-natal glooms
When all was—what? with infinite ambergris
The excellent kiss
Of Pan enshrouds me and invades.
See how the night-borne shades
Darken the grove!
There is no moon to-night
The foul red star blots out the stars.

So, Pan, thy love
 That brooks not any light
 Shall brand its shameful scars
 Even on this flesh—this royal flesh shall serve
 For the brute lust whose nerve
 Shall eat up blindness in me, and discover
 The mind of Pan, maker of all,
 In all—his lover.

Now still I stand entranced
 And the faint fires that danced
 Before the sunset like a vivid crown
 Of blood upon thine head,
 (O thou severe
 And strong, my lover, my delight!)
 Have all died down;
 And in the darkness, clear
 As the dawn's transient light;
 Are thy lips, live at last;
 Thine eyes, aflame at the red holocaust
 Of me thou gloatest over.
 See, I draw close,
 (O vital, murder-loving lover!)
 And all my being flows
 In a flood to my lips, and I kiss kiss kiss
 Madly, madly kiss,
 Out of rhythm, out of rime,
 Out of space, sense, time,
 Thy mouth—and I am thine:
 Sealed, sealed at last, enthroned upon
 The very star thou ridest on.
 O wine! o wine!
 Wine of thy luminous body rushing, gushing,
 Conquering, penetrating, crushing—
 All the seeds of darkness in me
 Splashed with fire and water,
 So that spring arises in me
 Like a warrior weary of slaughter
 Striding to the striped lair

Of deftly-woven camel's hair,
Where the trembling captive-woman
Waits his pleasure-hour inhuman!
All the roots of love and power
Flushed at last into a flower.
All the films of sense dissolved;
All the spirit sight evolved,
So that after myriad æons
Filled with trumpet-pealing pæans,
With the nuptial bliss of man
Prostituted unto Pan,
Rises on the vast inane
Your dread red star again!

O star, thy secret I possess :
I, watcher for man's happiness.
I go to ward thy craven curse
From the maiden Universe.

II

THE WHITE WIND

II

THE WHITE WIND

A bare volcanic desert. A foul lake stagnant in the distance. A crazy hovel on the edge of the squalid village. The clamour of Syrian dogs. A young girl stealing through the shadows of the moonless night, craftily.

THE GIRL

They have not stirred.
I am unseen, unheard.
Now for some honey of note
Plucked from the black lion's throat!
There is no moon: earth is too still.
A heat, yet bitter chill,
Is in the air, the windless air.
O for a breath of snow-wind on
The crest of Lebanon!
I would that boy that laughed
Upon me in the market would come by.
He twitched his robe awry,
And I beheld—ah! what a fatal graft
In that strange tree of youth! What gnarled and knobbed
Live tree throbbled, throbbled
With formidable threat—why did I fear?
What mystery encloses me?
My God! protect me! See
On the horizon what strange star awakes,
Like a gross lion that shakes
His tawny mane—and roars. Am I the prey?
See! like a tangle of black snakes
An evil smoke obscures the firmament

Belched from his throat! Now I repent
 This mine adventure; I must creep, creep in—
 I fear the night—oh day—day—come, sweet day!
 Best was thy spur, the bloodied silver ache
 That stings me like a snake,
 The itch of blood, the shapeless thing that nestles
 Between my baby breasts,
 The lion lust that wrestles
 With mine own soul—I understand so little—
 Nay! not the tiniest tittle!
 All that I know is this—the pangs consume
 My maiden lily-bloom.
 For all my cheeks are flooded with desire
 And shame, and black foul fire
 That bubbles in my soul, and shoots its terror
 Out of these sloe-black eyes
 Into the lake's unfathomable mirror,
 That, laughing back upon me laughing, lies.
 I will creep in—afar
 From the frenzy of yon nameless star.

But who art thou
 Descending in a cloud of cherubim?
 A moon-white sickle crowns that flashing brow;
 Thine head like the wise bird
 Splendidly grim
 That utters that unutterable word;
 Thy body like the bright sun in his strength;
 And all thy virgin length
 Armed with the sword and balances,
 Gold as the ultimate galaxies—

Thou art vanished. Surely the Presence of the Lord
 wast thou
 To utter forth some doom of dread—
 But now?

*(A young man in a white robe is found
 standing before her.)*

THE YOUTH

Maiden, be comforted!
The Lord hath listened unto thy lament,
The ululation of that wolfish stress;
And I am sent
To heal thy loneliness.

MIRIAM

Ah! thou art not as he that saw me
To-day. Thou art comelier than he,
And softly mayest thou draw me
From this perplexity.
But hast thou—hast thou such a thing of fear
(Like an old giant's knotty spear)
As he? Thou dost not laugh and leer
As he did. No! I will not show my face

(She drops her veil.)

Stand back, stand back a space!

(She advances toward him.)

Nay, touch me not. I am a virgin vowed—

(She lays her hand upon his arm.)

I am of royal race
Most mortal proud—

(She kneels, kissing his robe.)

Spare me, sweet sir!

*(She pretends to stagger, and falls back
upon the ground. Her robe falls from her.)*

THE YOUTH

I am a messenger.

(He disappears.)

MIRIAM

Shaitan! he slipped my grip.
 Is there no flood to drip
 Some icy liquor on this hell-scarred brow?
 See! The red star glows fainter now.
 All is a velvet heat of horror. Night
 Holds me in torture.

Hark! the lake

Stirs in its sleep; the ripples shake.
 —Oh for the wind! Here naked will I lie
 And let its coolness bite into my blood.
 —Ho! What a whistle of wind
 Whirling the spumy scud
 Of the lake into a column of ecstasy!
 Like a sharp spear it rushes up to me,
 And in my face it flutters like a dove
 Whispering strange words of love.
 It sunders me! it cuts me—now, ah! touch!
 These empty arms that grope, that strain, that clutch
 Mere air, grow limp.....

The wind is like a scythe

That cuts its swathe through my green field,
 Even as I groan and writhe
 In the agony that pierces to the marrow.
 The wind! the wind! an arrow
 That hath smitten me through the shield—
 I float in mine own virgin tide
 Let loose—ah! who are these that haunt me now,
 Tumbling from the desert brow
 Of the wild ensorcelled ridge,
 Like a warrior's sacrilege;
 Gnashing laughter sobbed or swelling
 To a pestilence of yelling,
 These gibbering apes that mop and mow
 And leap upon me? Surely this is Fear

With face averted that constrains me to him—
 And this blind worm is avarice. Let me woo him!
 Sweet God! I'll serve thee. This is Piety
 Twin-bodied with Hypocrisy that darts
 His icy slime into my heart of hearts.
 Here cringing Pity my wet womb inflates,
 And puffed-out Charity with loose red cheeks
 And greasy eyes. The Bigotry that sneaks
 Home to my home; and once installed there, hates
 The bleeding wound his mouth is fastened on;
 And here is Chastity that slavering sates
 His lust without the walls, grins, and is gone,
 Preening himself that his lewd lips relent.

This must be Cunning that insinuates
 His venom; this deformed and bent
 Dog-like abortion, stinking excrement,
 Is Slave-morality. Come all! I have
 A lyre still tuneable to your great theme,
 A pit as hospitable as the grave.
 Come, dead and living! I am yours to-night.
 Score after score! oh God—is this a dream?
 Then let me never wake! Exhaustless might
 Thrills me—as ever it shall—from the first thrust
 Of that white wind whose steeltipped gust
 Broke in my body to its lust.
 What? Are ye done?

There is a distant chorus
 Of robust voices; the earth heaves and pants
 As if the seven and seventy elephants
 Snow-white of Solomon made hither, marched
 On the black earth sun-parched
 Into the battle-front; grave and sonorous,
 A clang of arms salutes these ears, that twitch
 To catch the zenith pitch Of aught that, human or divine,
 Might pour some drowsy wine,
 Poppy-heads bruised and seethed
 In milk of asses ivy-wreathed

With honey and spice and wine moon-pale
 Strained though a virgin's veil—
 To ease this itch.

(Enter a Roman Centurion and his guard.)

THE CENTURION

Ha! Publius, saidst thou: "Jewish girls are chaste?"

PUBLIUS

Good—a barbarian Clodia Croup-in-air!

THE CENTURION

The brazenest whore in Syria, I dare swear!

PUBLIUS

Look at the blood! A very Hymen flare!

THE CENTURION

New meat to-night. She hath acquired the taste.
 Come, friends, enjoy her. Have we time to waste?
 I heard the cock crow.

(He embraces her rudely.)

PUBLIUS

Let it crow for her!

(One by one they defile her.)

MIRIAM

Scarce forty! Yet the dawn begins to stir:
 The Wolf's tail blots my star. At last I strain
 Some strength that strains my body back again.

THE CENTURION

Enough, lads! If she breed not, at my peril
 I shall uphold it "Jewish girls are sterile."

MIRIAM

Stay, will you go? What, are you men—or tame?

PUBLIUS

Faugh, wench! is there no shame?

(He kicks her brutally. The guard moves off.)

MIRIAM

The dawn! oh, curses on the dawn that breaks
This night of joy. God! my whole being wakes
Into a world of rapture. I am I
At last—the little fool that wondered why!
I am abreast of God's whole tide of thought.
Like gold into fine linen, I am wrought
Into the royal vesture of the globe.
I am the Empress of the City of Sin,
Wrapped in its purple robe
Stained with mine own maid's blood.
Yea! for all glorious within
Am I, most like the daughter of a king,
Voluptuously languishing
Like a great queen afloat upon the flood
In gilded barge On rugs of fur and silk
Brodered with curious device
Of basilisk and cockatrice
Upon the broad-woven scarlet marge.
—God! how this bosom boils with milk,
Its veined radiance swelling—
Ah! the light grows—
Back, from these splendid woes
And joys obscure
Into the squalid and impure
House, and the filth indwelling!

(She crawls within the hovel.)

III

THE BLUE DWARF

III

THE BLUE DWARF

SCENE, a stable containing three stalls. In the first, an ox; in the second, the girl Miriam; in the third, the ass Zakariah. The first is chewing the cud peaceable; the second, stretched naked on the straw, holds her sides and groans; the third lifts up his voice ever and anon in a formidable bray. The stable is lighted by two torches held respectively by an old and withered hag, her two remaining teeth—long yellow fangs—exposed in a grin; and by a blue faced baboon, who revels in his corner in the filth.

THE HAG, *addressing the baboon.*

Ho! her time is not yet come;
We may dance together, dear.
Say, how beautiful art thou
With thy shining shame protruding!
Darling, apeling, why so glum?
Turn away that rosy sphere;
Show me the delicious brow
Ever brooding, ever brooding
Surely on my loveliness.

(They dance a jig together.)

Look at her obscene distress!
How it makes me laugh to see her
Writhing in her pains.—Come hither,
Mistress! join us, laughing freer

As thy lips and cheeks grow whiter,
 And the old loves shrink and wither
 At the kisses of the smiter!
 Ho! Ho! Ho! a knock I hear...
 By my maidhood, who comes here?

*(The stable door is pushed in, and three holy
 kings appear, surrounded by their reti-
 nue. They enter in solemn procession,
 and seat themselves at the central stall.)*

GOVINDA

Say, my brother, is the vision
 That thou sawest in the grove
 Answered?

CHAU

Doth the exact division
 Of the azimuth rightly prove
 That the star points hither truly?

ALEXANDER

Brothers, all is proven duly.
 Memory joins with astrolabe:
 This the maiden—hers the babe.

MIRIAM

Who are ye? I would be alone.
 Now the loose and heaving zone
 Frets me. Go, my mates, carouse
 With the cuckold of the house
 With his adze and awl and chisel!
 Zakariah with gilded pizzle
 And this bull grown sleek and smooth
 To an ox suffice, in sooth,
 Love's exalted task—and thus
 Kings are grown superfluous.
 Ai! but now the monster splits me
 Struggling in his bloody cage.

Is it in his sport or rage?
 Answer that, thou doting sage!
 For his cacodæmon shape
 Twisting round no longer fits me.
 This is like some hellish rape
 Of one's soul the grisly ape!
 Get ye forth to Aggereth
 Riding in her golden car
 Yoked to ox and ass that prance
 In their evil Hinnom-dance!
 I am writhing with my death
 Born of the infernal Star.

ALEXANDER

Nay, our lady, we are come
 To thy worship—high and holy;
 From our heaven-wide halidom
 To the manger dark and lowly We have brought
 taraxacum,
 Mandrake, amrit, myrrh and moly;
 Many a royal gift of gree
 From the land of Danae,
 From the coral-breeding sea,
 From the steppes of Tartary!

GOVINDA

I have brought a treasure-chest
 Full of gold, red gold galore,
 All a pirate's hoarded store
 From the islands of the West
 Gathered far with blood and tears
 For three score and seven years.
 All this wealth of virgin gold
 This thy babe shall helt and hold.
 He shall buy the souls of priests;
 Forge men chains, and make them beasts;
 Give the carrion soldier meat,
 And corrupt the judgment-seat.
 With it he shall seethe the snake

Of his faith in fire-hot blood ;
 Hurt the humble, strew the stake
 With the faggots ; gild the rood
 That for many a year shall brand
 With its blight full many a land.

CHAU

I have brought him frankincense.
 He shall dull therewith the sense
 Of his slaves, that they may be
 Docile in their slavery.
 He shall fill their aching minds
 With the smoke that madness finds
 The sole cloak of anarchy.
 Misty vapours demon-wrought
 Fill the cold clear dome of thought.

ALEXANDER

Mother, I have brought him myrrh.
 Sorrow black and sinister
 Shall his name bring to the race.
 Wheresoever on the earth
 Shall be heard his hissing name
 Shall be madness and disgrace,
 Falsehood, barrenness, and shame
 For the folk of praise and worth.
 All the pure, the fair, the young
 Shall taste curses on his tongue ;
 But the old, the chill, the base,
 Shall find beauty in his face.
 Also, of Astarte's fruit
 We have brought him orchis root.
 Cinquefoil, and musk, and fins
 Of the turtle and the shark
 Scraped with damiana-bark,
 Every grain a score of sins !
 In this flask of crystal lurks
 Bruised virility of Turks,
 Boiled with wine and ambergris—

Every drop an hour of bliss!
 This cornelian box contains
 Datura-seeds and sparrow-brains,
 Mixed and smoothed with asses' fat.
 Here the marrow of a bat
 Consecrated by a wizard
 And the seed-cells of a lizard
 Banned by a Thessalian witch,
 Lie like twins—royally rich
 In this casket wrought with gems
 Fit for Mogul diadems.

MIRIAM

O dogs, kings, gods, begone!
 Bone splits from bone.
 I am ripped up like a sweating sow
 On the horn of a buffalo!
 What care I for your gifts, unless
 They might relieve this wretchedness?
 God! I am split asunder
 Like a cloud by a clap of thunder!

GOVINDA

The sweat is on thy forehead like bright stars
 Amid the milk of the galaxy.

CHAU

Thy body gapes like a valley of deodars
 Between two snowy hills in Tartary.

ALEXANDER

Ho! Ho! a million rats
 Herald the brat's
 First yelp.

*(A vast company of rats issue from her, and
 rush squeaking into the darkness.)*

MIRIAM

God be mine help!
 Adrammelek exacts a death
 For every dance with Astoreth.

GOVINDA

Cling to the ass-god, queen!
 Now while his loud obscene
 Bray deafens us—now cling
 To the lewd stark dripping thing
 Thou has caressed and gilt
 From the point to the gross hilt
 With the babe-gold of thy bright skin,
 Wolfing it in
 As the dragon swallows up the moon!

CHAU

See, she will swoon.
 This is magnificent.
 I would not lose the event—
 Ho! boy, bring wine! Black wine in jars of jade
 Cooled all these months in hoarded snow!
 Black wine with purple starlight in its bosom,
 Oily and sweet as the soul of a brown maid
 Brought from the forenoon's archipelago,
 Her brows bound bright with many a scarlet blossom—
 Like the blood of the slain that flowered free
 When we met the black men knee to knee!

ALEXANDER

Brothers, how found you me?

GOVINDA

I have a gipsy girl
 Skilled in the mystic art.
 She knows the trick to curl
 Dried leaves in fire, and augur thence.
 I bought her in the mart
 From an old Greek—a vile old man!

He told me she was a Bohemian ;
And by a fabulous conjuring with cards
Indeed she can divine.

CHAU

So can our bards.
These girls are shifty.

GOVINDA

Maybe so ; but list !
(I pray you) She can take an amethyst
And see a thousand visions.

CHAU

So can I
When the wine fills me. Pray you !

*(His slave presents wine to Govinda, who
drinks.)*

GOVINDA

Health, my lord !
This wine is marvellous dry !
Scented like clover reaching up the broad
Edge of some glacier in my northern marches.

CHAU

Look, how she writhes—speechless distemperature
Her shriek within her gorge that parches !

GOVINDA

Boy, bid that cup-slave from Ferozapur
Make me an ode of this—nay, while I think !
An elegy.

CHAU

Please your majesty to drink ?

GOVINDA

Thanks, brother. Well, my gipsy girl divined
 The purport of the star we saw enshrined
 In the eclipse—to say so—of the sky.
 I feared her perfidy ;
 The journey might prove tedious—(nay, my lords !
 Star or no star, I am honoured, glad, to find
 Such royal mates !). But her, I had her stripped
 And most magnificently whipped
 By two tall slaves (a Tartar and a Goth)
 Till all the flesh was ripped
 From her olive back—she looked like a dead camel
 When a man frightens off the kites ;
 And her rich blood came all afroth
 To her lips' vermeil enamel—
 The lips that I had kissed !
 And still she would persist.
 You see, she had her rights ;
 For here am I come—a feast I had not missed
 Willingly, for a thousand beads of jade,
 Or a broad-hipped Nubian maid,
 Or a diamond flask of rose-perfume,
 Or a Shiraz boy in his first best bloom !
 Oh, I rewarded her well altogether,
 For she slept at my feet through the cold mountain
 weather.

CHAU

I who am come from the remote abode
 Beyond the highest snows,
 Beyond the swiftest river,
 Was moved thereto by a strange goad—
 Stranger, my lords, than all your wisdom knows !
 For in the city of gold and jade Beyond where my vassal
 Tartars shiver I have a dagger gold-inlaid
 Sharp as an arrow from the heavenly quiver ;
 Its hilt of clustered fires, a crusted jewel
 Fashioned in the likeness of a demon-king
 Most exquisitely cruel :—

Daily I try my luck
By the Oracle of the Bleeding Duck.

GOVINDA

Look! what a horrid horde of toads
Hops from the Syrian wench!

(Toads, issuing from the maid, hop off croaking into the darkness.)

MIRIAM

Ah! ribald croak!
Intolerable stench!
Spasm on spasm of agony still goads
My soul to get to God.

GOVINDA

The third should be the final period.
What portent may we look for?

ALEXANDER

By this dial

We must wait yet a little, majesties!

CHAU

I tell you of the Oracle. I took
(So that it might be an exhaustive trial)
A snow-white bird with purple tail-feathers
Wherein pale flames of gold mingled and shook.
Here, too, my wisest ministers
Gathered to solve the riddle of the Star.
But so the balky brute
Crushed in this gnarled fist
Maintained the unequal war
That at the dagger-sweep
Strongly she leapt—I missed!
And all my joy and all her crimson flux
Sprang in a mingled river to the West.

GOVINDA

See how she tears her breast!

CHAU

She is like a wounded horse
Gored by some old rogue-elephant.
For now the mouth springs open, and a yell
Like the shriek of the throat of hell
Bursts, and is choked by a vomit of black worms.

ALEXANDER

All this most critically confirms
Our calculations. Boy! the long pale glass
Fashioned of ambergris and chrysopras.
Fill it with the old, the ripe Satyrion,
And bear it to their Majesties. Anon
We shall see?—

GOVINDA

Sure, a son

CHAU

I wager thirty loads of merchandise
Most precious—sandalwood and gold and spice
And jewels, and divine medicaments,
And goat-hair broideries, and silken tents—
And thirty diamonds of the purest water,
It is a daughter!

ALEXANDER

I take it—and yours too, my lord. Maybe
You both are wrong.

GOVINDA

True, this much mystery
Veils the whole matter—it were hard to say.

CHAU

Shang Ti! how fierce a bray
The amorous ass gives.

MIRIAM

Heave, o heave, my sides!
 Stretch! Split! This pang decides
 For life or death. Now!—Stretch!—
 Plague on the wretch!
 Friends, ease me—with a scimitar!

ALEXANDER

We learnt not that from the dark Star.

MIRIAM

Why then, be cursed!
 My belly is about to burst.

(The hag and the baboon come forward.)

THE HAG

Ho! we will lift the prudish latch.
 Dear apeling, hold the torches while I catch
 This monster. So. Dispatch!

MIRIAM

God! let it be a boy.
 I would enjoy
 His love.
 Who hath come forth with such keen pain
 Owes keener pleasure, going back again.
 A curse upon that Dove.
 Whose windy letch hath blown me out
 Like a rich man with flatulence and gout!

THE HAG

Ho! stanch thy throttle! Come forth!

(She delivers her.)

O jest insane!
 For all this pious pain
 Naught but an old brass bottle!

GOVINDA

Maybe it holds the two and seventy
Jinn That Solomon screwed in.

ALEXANDER

More like, the wine that Dionysus spilled
From Cyprus grapes distilled.

CHAU

We lose our wagers? It may be
Best to unscrew it, and to see.

MIRIAM

Have ye no pity, kings, at this disease?
O then I am a mere muck-midden of shame.
But yet my body feeds on flame
As if some masterpiece
Were wrought—I know not how—pray cease!
Leave me with these!

CHAU

Midden or maiden, we must see the birth
Of thy black womb.
Why do these moans disturb our mirth?
I will have thee lashed to shreds
By this vile groom
Unless thou quit thy prating.

THE HAG

Here's pay for months of waiting.

(She detaches the placenta.)

A black old rotten wine-skin, mangy goat
Patched with bat, stork, and stoat!

ALEXANDER

Here come the bottle back, washed bright.
Yes, this is certainly the seal
Of Solomon.

GOVINDA

I feel
That we are on the brink of some strange sight.

CHAU

The whole event has seemed improbable.
Scribes, you record this well!
Or I will have you sliced with the keen steel
My cook keeps razor-sharp for salted swine.
Nine thousand cuts, nine hundred cuts,
And ninety cuts and nine Cut exquisitely fine,
And the last slash in your guts
If by an hair's breadth your recital
Obscure the true, omit the vital!

ALEXANDER

Out springs the screw.
Ho! the mannikin slim and sprightly
Dressed in a neat surtout of blue
With the head of a goat and the nose of a Jew
And the...

GOVINDA

Would your Pasiphae challenge him lightly?

CHAU

Truly, a marvel. Come, little man!
We kiss your hands, and sail back home
Over the desert and over the foam.

ALEXANDER

And I go back to the grove of Pan.

GOVINDA

What is thy name? I will proclaim
Thy marvellous fame
From the Gulf of Kutch to the shores of Orissa.

MIRIAM

I pray your Majesty, call him Issa.

THE BABE

Nay! I am come to the hour appointed.
Anoint me, sirs, and call me 'Anointed!'

GOVINDA

Rather be Baa-Baa called, for thy jerkin
Is a fleece like his friends wrap an holy Turk in,
When he twirls on his toes
Regarding his nose
Or his paunch that would hold a firkin!

THE HAG

The little beast is double-jointed.
Dance a spring, thou springal strutting
Like a stag in the glades at the season of rutting!

ALEXANDER

Dance, o thou imp
Of the bottle of brass
With the hag and the pimp
And the ox and the ass!

GOVINDA

Dance, o thou mannikin
Dwarf and malign
To the clink of Earth's pannikin
Drained of its wine!

CHAU

Dance, to the scream
Of strangled humanity,
The delirious dream
Of the Vampires of Vanity!

(The kings rise, bow, and depart.)

THE KINGS

Away, away like the wanton wind!
One to the groves of ilex tall;
One to the plains of infinite Ind;
One beyond the Mongol wall.
As we met, so we part.
Three great kings and one true heart!

IV

THE BLACK BEAN

IV

THE BLACK BEAN

SCENE—A small Syrian mud hut. On a truckle bed strewn with dirty straw lie a naked man and woman.

MAGDA

Give me more money, Baa-Baa, for a kiss ;
One of my kisses.

ISSA

Youdesch has the bag.

(A pause.)

Also I weary of thy sordidness.
Love is at bottom a most noisome hag.
Mother and brothers! all the pageant passes
Like a loud caravan of braying asses ;
And now I—love thee! in this hole of hell.
A rotting camel by a dried-up well!

Pah! but the brothel-reek contaminates.
There is no air—thy bed is poisonous,
Thy breath—thy leper-life lascivious—
Fill me with loathing. Murder-waking hates
Surge in upon me as I see thee there
Wanton and white in that red touzie of hair
As if a sow were wreathed with poppy-flowers.
Pah! I am sick of these delirious hours.
John's lips are cool like olive-oil—and thine,
Even at the best, like some black stormy wine.

MAGDA

Oh beast thou art! Didst thou not surely quicken me
With child?

ISSA

Thy lewdness and thy lowness sicken me.
Nay, let the heavy-fringed purple lashes
Lie still—my lust is burnt to bitter ashes!
The wrinkled eyepits black with grime and kohl
Are like black bogs to suck away my soul.
The coarse vermilion on thy cheeks is fire
Of hell to blast the charred stump of desire.
The blue tattoo-marks stain thy mouth like bruises;
The fat creeps on thy body as it chooses,
Fighting the leanness of thy lechery
That hags thee—Faugh!

MAGDA

Art thou not lewd with me?

ISSA

Ay! and the rot of Egypt pays me for't.

MAGDA

To match thy rotten soul, thou pimping ort!
Marrowless bone! Dry fig!

ISSA

Enough, black bitch!
The Seventy shall stone thee for a witch.

MAGDA

More than enough. I'll call thy darling itch, Thy—

(He fists her in the abdomen.)

ISSA

Take the name back to thy bloated belly!
Speak, and I kick thy carcass to a jelly!

MAGDA

Thou empty bottle of brass of Bethlehem!
John, come and loose this surly saviour's phlegm!

*(John descends a rickety ladder from a
loft. Magda spits, and goes out.)*

JOHN

Hail, master, let me soothe thy time of teen!

ISSA

Wine rots the liver; fever swells the spleen;
Meat clogs the belly; dusts inflames the eye:
Stone irks the bladder; gout—plague—leprosy!
Man born of woman is most full of trouble;
God a gorged fool that belches him, a bubble!—
But of all plagues wherewith a man is cursed,
Take my word for it, woman is the worst!

JOHN

Maybe, dear Lord, of all the words men say
Of thine, that one shall never pass away.
But what hath the wench done?

ISSA

Undone me quite,
Nagged me with sordid greediness all night,
Greed for my gold, my person—all I have.
Saith not the prophet: "Cruel as the grave?"
That grinning mask, that musk-rat, hath enriched
Her rags by every inch of me that itched;
And for one itch hath planted me another,
The "friend that sticketh closer than a brother."
Ten groans of mine for every grin of hers!
What saith the prophet?—"Whited sepulchres!"

JOHN

Nay, Lord, the phrase unique is all thine own.

ISSA

Then write it down, an nothing less atone.
And add—of all the itches that breed bile
No itch beats the papyrus and the style.

JOHN

Hast thou no love for me, Lord?

ISSA

Yes, lad, yes.
—Tinged through with many-coloured bitterness!
For as I lay this night of hateful heat,
The blow-flies buzzing, the eternal bleat
Of strayed sheep, the intense malefic hum
Of the accurst mosquito, the far drum
Of the winged beetle, the reiterate stings
Of fouler vermin, the hot breath that brings
The sunset's garlic to the midnight's rose,
The red whore's writhings, clutches swift to close
On this worn limb, exact the woman-debt
To the last mite, the cold grey glutinous sweat—
These things, I say, assailed me, bade me pause
Praising the goodness of the great First Cause.

JOHN

Yet all we know His vast benevolence.

ISSA

Thou hast religion, but no common sense.
The cud of wisdom is not duly chewed
When whoredom's whittled with a platitude.

JOHN

The upshot?

ISSA

I am sick of everything.

JOHN

Of me, Lord?

ISSA

Thou the least, sweet queen and king.
But—finally—in sooth, lad—even of thee.

JOHN

Lord, have I failed in love?

ISSA

Failure must be.

Not by thy fault, but fixed in every feature
Of Mistress Smirking Whore, our Mother Nature,
Whose filthy dugs our poisoned kisses suck.
Pah! the whole world is just a mass of muck.

JOHN

Wait, master! that's a Phrase.

ISSA

Take note of it:

Matter is muck!

JOHN

True wisdom and true wit!
The upshot, Lord?

ISSA

Than living, I would rather
Play the fool's game of my unnatural Father.

JOHN

Thy father, Lord? Thy pardon, but we heard—

ISSA

No odds—all genealogy's absurd.

JOHN

Suppose, Lord, I should simply call Thee "Word?"

ISSA

Happy the thought! But, in thy secret ear,
There was a scheme—thou mark'st me?

JOHN

Crystal clear.

ISSA

I came from heaven.

JOHN

We guessed it.

ISSA

Guess again!

What follows?

JOHN

—Er—

ISSA

To humbug me is vain.

Guess!

JOHN

Well, to come from heaven—Thou com'st to reign?

ISSA

I die—thou mark'st me?

JOHN

Truly: plain as plain!

ISSA

And then, to counterbalance the effect—
What next?

JOHN

I cannot say.

ISSA

I resurrect.

JOHN

What good would that do?

ISSA

As I understand,
It would spoil life for everyone.

JOHN

How grand!
How simple!

ISSA

Look, boy, I am tired of things.
Joy, that had legs before, hath now got wings.
I am exceeding weary.

JOHN

Even of me?

ISSA

Yes—no—yes—what thou wilt. All's one.

JOHN

I see.
Then thou wilt slay thyself?

ISSA

'Twere too much trouble,
Having cut the corn, to clear away the stubble.
Hire thou a knave to slay me.

JOHN

Lord, I dare not.

ISSA

Denounce me to the Seventy—I care not.

Indeed, since Death is Death, small odds the plan of it!
I'll rather choose to get what fun I can of it.

JOHN

I have it, Lord! Well make thy death suggest
Adonis, Attis, Mithras, and the rest;
And if there lack some detail—

ISSA

Thou art wise

Enough to write in all the prophecies
Fulfilled. That's settled, then.

JOHN

I'd love to see

The goggling eyes of duped posterity,
Its mouth agape (while priests scoop out its poke)
At the wild sequel of our harmless joke.

ISSA

Only one further fret balls up my brain:
—The nuisance, if I have to rise again.

JOHN

Fear not! The style suffices.

ISSA

Then be off,

And tell the Seventy my bitter scoff
At their phylacteries, my clever stroke
At God, my break-and-build-the-temple joke:
And make the fell indictment yet completer
With my bewildering pun on 'rock' and 'Peter!'

JOHN

It shall be done.

ISSA

Nay, thou wouldst feel remorse.

Let the whole matter simply take its course!
Our Youdesh is a thief; so, sure to rat.
He'll raise their camel to conceal his gnat.

JOHN

How choice a metaphor! How terse! How dry!
Apt as thy 'camel and the needle's eye.'

ISSA

Agreed, then! Now if Brothers Louse and Bug
Will let me be, I'll settle slack and snug
Till noon.

JOHN

I too, Lord, I would sleep with Thee.

ISSA

Lie down, then! On thine oath, no knavery!

JOHN

Sleep well, dear master! Kiss me!

ISSA

Pah, young thickhead!

(The door opens.)

No peace, saith someone somewhere, for the
wicked!

(Enter Magda.)

What is it now?

MAGDA

If Rabbi Pip is gone,
It's Back to Bed!

(Issa wearily rises.)

ISSA

Then—Back to Bed with John!

JOHN

What, wilt Thou go?

ISSA

Yea, by the holy hem
Of Aaron's robe—off to Jerusalem!

*(He goes out, followed by the protesting
pair.)*

V

THE GREY NIGHT

V

THE GREY NIGHT

SCENE.—The thick darkness of the Emptiness of Things. Yet in the midst appears a certain glory veiling the figure of a tall stern man, the king Alexander. In his hand is a black rod clothed with twin glittering snakes, the royal Uraeus Serpents of ancient Khem; at its point gleams faint and blue A star of six rays, whose light now illumines the pale and tortured features of a man, with outstretched arms, who is hanging (apparently) in space. It is Issa, but the weariness is gone; and noble-strong is the scarred brow of his agony.

ALEXANDER.

In the puissance of my will,
Issa, I uphold thee still.

ISSA.

Thou art?

ALEXANDER

Keeper of the Way.

ISSA

I am?

ALEXANDER

Man, at mine essay.
By the balance reaching forth
To the south and to the North
Have I consecrated thee

Co-victim with humanity.
 O Mis-begotten, miscreate
 Dwarf as thou wast, the child of hate ;
 Thou who hast felt the sordidness
 Of thine own effect on thine own distress ;
 Art comest hereby to the stature of man
 By my power, who am Pan.
 And by this death shalt laugh to know
 Thy father's final overthrow.

My soul the heights and depths has spanned.
 I hold the star-streams in mine hand.
 I am the master of life and death
 And of every spirit that quickeneth.
 Yea! in the light of knowledge, Pan
 Hath grasped at the blackness of the ban :
 And thus do I crush it. As the storm
 Whirls shrieking round thy ghastly form,
 Thy spirit's torture shall abate
 The bodily pangs of thy fearsome fate.
 Weak fool! The fate of Arcady
 And the whole world—that hung on thee!
 Hadst thou but made thee Emperor,
 And led thy legions into war!
 Thou broken reed—a birth unclean,
 A life sucked up in sordid spleen,
 A death absurd, most foully wrought
 To the shape of thy father's leper-thought.
 This be thy doom, that thou shalt see
 The curses that are born of thee!
 Thou black bat that hast barred the sun
 From the sight of man, thou minion
 Of death and disease, of toil and want,
 Of slavery, knavery, greed and cant,
 Of bigotry, murder, hypocrisy
 —Speak thou the things that are seen of thee!

ISSA

Canst thou not save me, Pan,
 And balk the bestial plan?

ALEXANDER

I too have died to Pan, and he
Hath begotten upon me
A secret wonder that must wait
For the hour of the falling of thy fate.
Nineteen centuries shalt thou
Plague earth with that agonizing brow,
And then that age of sordid strife
Give place to the æon of love and life.

A lion shall rise and swallow thee,
Bringing back life into Arcady.
So strong shall he roar that the worlds shall quake
And the waters under the heaven break,
That the earth, of thy father's hate accurst,
Shall be greener and gladder than at first.

ISSA

I shall endure then, if the Ultimate
Be reached through the black fate.

ALEXANDER

Let that sustain thee—yet this hour
I put forth all my torture-power
To grind thee in the mills of martyrdom,
That at last thy spirit may fully come
To understand and to repent—
Else might thy new-born strength relent
And all thy father's hate corrode
Thy will, as the breath of a bloat toad
Might rot the lungs of a young child.
Then were indeed the earth defiled
And the sole seedlings that must lurk
In the desert world—waste by thy work—
Itself its loveliness transplant
To a flawless field whose grace should grant
Life to that bright inhabitant.

Issa

These eyes are blind with blood and tears ;
 They strain across the doubtful years ;
 They search the stars : the earth they scan ;
 All, all spells Misery to Man.

Of whom I am. First, fables gross and foul
 Hooted and hissed by human snake and owl
 About me, twisted into doleful engines
 Of greed, hate, envy, jealousy and vengeance.
 Next, scythes laid to the root of every flower
 That asks but sunshine for its brief glad hour.
 Next, axes at the root of every tree
 That strains its top to immortality.
 Yea, o thou terrible magician,
 I see the black wings of suspicion
 Fanning each ear with tales of spite,
 Blasting each bud with bitter blight.
 I see the poisonous upas-tree,
 Its shade the ghastly trinity
 —Religion, law, morality—
 Sicken with its stifling breath
 Human loveliness to death.
 I myself the tool of priests,
 Tyrants, merchants, hags and beasts,
 Lawyers, doctors, artizans,
 Whores and theologians !
 All my live misunderstood
 Built in slime and nursed with blood !
 This my death divinely hallows
 Boot and rack, stake and gallows.
 Strong men crushed beneath my domes,
 Children tortured in my homes,
 Women tricked and raked and herded
 In the stinking sty bemedded
 With the putrid excrement
 Of the marriage sacrament.
 Every scourge and sore and shame
 Blest in mine accursed name !

Love and beauty under ban!
Wit and wisdom barred to man!
Nature smirched by hideous lies!
Meanness lauded to the skies!
Pain and ruin and disease
Praised, as if they made mine ease.
Dead be dance and dream and revel!
Thought and courage, things of evil!
Corn and milk, wine and oil,
The guerdon of degrading toil!
Life's bright draught of honied leisure
Soured to sick and tasteless pleasure.
All the gracious grape degraded,
To a fatuous foulness faded;
Ecstasy divinely deep
Bartered for a brutal sleep
In whose grunting crapulence
They may forget the glory whence
They came, and hide in a stinking slum
The beastliness they have become.
Wealth complaining in its sty!
Stark starvation standing by!
Poet, painter, sculptor, sage
Prostituted to their age;
Or starved or tortured, should they hold
To the clear sunlight and the age of gold,
—Scarce a tithe of all I see,
Yet—thou dost not pity me?

ALEXANDER

Thou art near death: thy corpse light dawns on us.
See! the tenebrous glare and venomous
And all it shews. Enough! I leave thee, man
To hide me in the secret place of Pan
Beneath the fallen groves Arcadian.

*(He fades away, as if the new light, making
the filth visible, made him invisible.)*

ISSA

I am nailed here too fast:—
 I strain in agony aghast;
 For I have blotted out the sun
 From the sight of everyone.
 With me on either hand lie slain
 Ah! Never more to rise again!—
 Virtue and beauty. Dark and dank,
 The low hill's baked and barren bank!
 There at my feet the glib scribe scrawls
 His flatulent Gnostic caterwauls
 For gaping agapic festivals.
 By him the red-haired harlot sprawls,
 And the blotchy beast that suckled me
 Squats like a toad, and shamelessly
 Ogles the crowd of bystanders
 With those wicked glittering eyes of hers.
 Perched high above me the foul bird
 My father belches his lewd word,
 Triumphant in his scheme's success
 That binds the globe in bitterness.
 Blithe, the hag and the baboon
 Frisk it to the tuneless tune
 Of a sow that drums upon
 A half-rotted skeleton.
 Round me stretch the busy lines
 Of architects at their designs—
 Brothels, jails and hospitals,
 Legislatures, arsenals,
 Churches—towers and spires and domes,
 Houses—nay! But the white tribe's homes
 Whose chalky skins shall match their shores,
 While their itching prudes and satiate shores
 Bear—strange fate!—in that puritan den
 The goodliest graft of the race of men
 'Mid the ruck of hypocrite and slave
 That grovel and groan from the womb to the grave.
 Sadly keeping watch and ward
 Are the century and his guard.

AGRIPPA

These portents much oppress me.

PUBLIUS

Bodes

Also my soul.

AGRIPPA

Such anger goads
My spirit at this strange black time.
This duty hath the eyes of crime!

PUBLIUS

Duty insists.

AGRIPPA

But fear persuades.
This deathly light, these foul grey shades!

PUBLIUS

Portending little enough of good
To Rome, that beats with our heart's blood.
See how dejected on their spears
The guard lean!

AGRIPPA

Rather a thousand years
Of strife than this black peace. Accurst
I know this night shall be.

ISSA

I thirst.

AGRIPPA

Give him to drink!

PUBLIUS

How strange a fate!
Those noble eyes irradiate
This leprous luster.

AGRIPPA

Black thing that sits with sneer and scowl!
Over his head.

PUBLIUS

What now? Beshrew
Me, but its face is like a Jew!

YAUGH WAUGH

Butch! The game is fairly started.
I will back to night and chaos.—Ha! Hoo!
Formlessly presiding
Over the ruined earth.
Ga! Ga!
Ab—ab—ab—ab—ab—

(He flies off.)

ISSA

Behold! He hath forsaken me.
The doom is fixed, but my spirit is free
From his loathsome company.

AGRIPPA

What was that cry?

1ST SOLDIER

I hardly heard it.

2ND SOLDIER

I heard it sir, but I could not word it.

MAGDA

I understood it, my lord.

AGRIPPA

Well, slattern?

MAGDA

He called for a prophet.

PUBLIUS

A Priest of Saturn

That is, I fancy. These barbarians
Are really like our Unitarians.

AGRIPPA

So I have heard. Last year I flirted
With Isis—but was unconverted.
If this man's prophet loose my nails
I'll gibe no more at prophet's whales.

PUBLIUS

I loathe and despise all kinds of fiction
Whether or no it ease life's friction.

AGRIPPA

Anoint the next fair lambkin's fleece
With rock-sand in the stead of grease.

PUBLIUS

He speaks again.

ISSA

Forgive me, brothers!
I knew not what I did.

PUBLIUS

His mother's

Here; wants the body.

AGRIPPA

She must have
An order from the prefect.

MIRIAM, *to a bystander.*

Knave

Wilt earn a penny? Beg this grace,
For the death-dews stand on the bloodless face.

1ST BYSTANDER

What is the name of the criminal?

A GREEK DISCIPLE FROM ALEXANDRIA

Logos, or Homoniousios! Say,

JOHN

Fool! Homoousios—lippis et nota! Nay,

THE GREEK

Homoiousios, with the iota!

JOHN

Nay, thou Greek heretic devil, have done!
Before He is dead a schism begun?
Say Homoousios!

THE GREEK

Never, dog Jew!
Homoiousios!

JOHN

Master, decide!

ISSA

O may I cease! If my spirit to you
I must commend.

JOHN

Are you now satisfied?
Clear as—

THE GREEK

You lie, pathic!

JOHN

Pandar!

THE GREEK

Demented!

JOHN

Here is the argument Ehud invented!

*(He thrusts a dagger into the belly of the
Greek disciple from Alexandria. The dirt
comes out. To the Bystander,)*

PUBLIUS

Surely they will
While his logic is backed with such surgical skill.

TWO BYSTANDERS

We fly to do as you desire us.

JOHN

And bring me up a clean papyrus!
These chapters will make of no account
The ridiculous sermon on the mount.
Where was I? With twelve æon-chains
Somewhere revolving in these brains;
Synoches, teletarchs, iynges,
All turning as smoothly as if on hinges:
Identity of Father and Son
And a Comforter, comforting everyone
Who reads the beautiful message of John!

AGRIPPA

Know, I can hardly hold myself in.
The whole scene tests our discipline
Somewhat too harshly. Were it not best
For a soldier to run him through the breast?
We should be free for a bath and a meal.

PUBLIUS

Sir!

AGRIPPA

I know well ; but I somehow feel
My backbone slacked to the writhe of a worm.

PUBLIUS

The perfect would know how to keep you firm
At the cost of a handful of nails—up there!

AGRIPPA

Tis the influence of this filthy glare.
Stronger it grows.

PUBLIUS

How very surprising,
For the sun shews devil a sign of rising!

AGRIPPA

The guard should have come an hour ago
To relieve us.

1ST SOLDIER

By Zeus! 'twas a foul throw!

2ND SOLDIER

Throw again!

3RD SOLDIER

It's Venus! The coat is mine.
Silky-soft and rainbow-fine!
Would the world were never duller
Than this cool cascade of colour!

AGRIPPA

Something serious is occurring.
All the town is lighted, stirring.
We had best bring reinforcement.

PUBLIUS

Death was duty's one divorcement.

AGRIPPA

Pooh! The stern old Roman! Fudge!
Even Horatio would budge.
Kill that Jew, men!

A SOLDIER

Heard and done.

ISSA

It is finished!

PUBLIUS

Ill begun
When the Roman virtue sleeps!

AGRIPPA

Death, man! See the tide that sweeps
From his side, a pinkish flood
Of foaming water mixed with blood.
It swells; it washes all the hill—

PUBLIUS

It sweeps out valour, duty, will.
Sordid luxury shall tame
The grand old Roman fame.
Let us go! The filthy spate
Washes out all good within me.
Fear and softness, hurry and hate
Seem to stab me, storm me, win me.
Virtue reels inebriate:
Rome is flung upon her fate.

*(He wheels with the rest, as they march
down the hill. Above, a faintly luminous
Shadow, appears Alexander the king, or
as it were an image of his image.)*

ALEXANDER

The flood sweeps on
From horizon to horizon.
Beauty, strength, virtue, all are gone.

(the eclipse passes.)

Now sudden springs the natural face
Of all the earth's old grace.
The broad sun smiles, as if that fatal close
Of the revel in the garden of Eros
Had never been.
Yet to this keen
Sight, to this sleuth-hound scent for subtle truth,
The essential youth
Of all things is corrupt. I will away
Into the mystic palaces of Pan
Hidden from day,
Hidden from man,
Awaiting there the coming of the Sphinx
Whose genius drinks
The poison of this pestilence, and saves
The world from all its lords and slaves.
Ho! for his chariot-wheels that whirl afar!
His hawk's eye flashing through the silver star!
Upon the heights his standard shall be plant
Free, equal, passionate, pagan, dominant,
Mystic, indomitable, self-controlled,
The red rose glowing on its cross of gold...

Yea! I will wait throughout the centuries
Of the universal man-disease
Until the morn of his titanic birth...
The Saviour of the Earth!