

## CEBERUS.

I STOOD within Death's gate,  
And blew the horn of Hell:  
Mad laughters echoing against Fate,  
Harsh groans less terrible,  
Howled from beneath the vault; in night the avenging  
thunders swell.

The guardian stood aloof,  
A monster multiform.  
His armour was of triple proof,  
His voice out-shrilled the storm.  
Behind him all the Furies whirl and all the Harpies  
swarm.

The first face spake and said:  
"Welcome, O King, art thou!  
Await thy throne a thousand dead;  
A crown awaits thy brow,  
A seven-sting scorpion; for thy rod thou hast a bauble  
now."

The next face spake and said:  
"Welcome, O Priest, to me!

Red blood shall dye thee robes of red,  
Hell's cries thy litany!  
Thy mitre sits, divided strength, to end thy church  
and thee!"

The third face spake and said :  
"Welcome, O Man, to Death!  
Thy little span of life is sped,  
Sighed out thy little breath.  
The worm that never dies is thine; the fire that  
lingereth!"

"Three voices has thy frame,  
Their music is but one.  
Fool-demon, slave of night and shame,  
That canst not see the sun!  
I am the Lord thy God: make thou homage and  
orison!"

The wild heads sank in fear :  
Then, troubled, to those eyes  
Remembrance crept of many a year,  
Barred gates of Paradise.  
Again the Voice rolled in the deep, mingled with  
murmuring sighs :

"I mind me of the day  
One came from Death to me ;  
His soul was weary of the day,  
His look was melancholy ;  
He bade me open in the Name that binds Eternity.

“Yet though he passed within  
And plunged within the deep,  
The seven palaces of sin,  
And slept the lonely sleep,  
Yet came He out alone: but then I thought I heard  
Them weep.

“He passed alone, above,  
Out of the Gates of Night;  
Angels of Purity and Love  
Drew to my sound and sight.  
I heard Them cry that even there He fixed the eternal  
Light.

“I think beneath these groans,  
And laughters madness-born,  
Tears fell that might dissolve the stones  
That grind the accurséd corn.  
Beneath the deep, beneath the deep, may dwell the  
star of morn!

“Therefore, O God, I pray  
Redemption for the folk  
That dread the scourging light of day,  
That bear the midnight yoke.  
The Chaos was no less than this—and there the light  
awoke.”

“O Dog of Evil, yea!  
Thou hast in wisdom said.

The glory of the living day  
Shall shine among the dead.  
Thy faith shall have a holier task, thy Strength a  
goodlier stead.”

Then I withdrew the light  
Of mine own Godhead up,  
As stars that close with broken night  
Their adamantine cup.  
I sought the solar airs: my soul on its own tears  
might sup.

For in the vast profound  
Still burns the rescuing sign;  
Beyond all sight and sense and sound  
The symbol flames divine.  
For He shall make all life, all death, His solitary  
shrine.