

CHANT ROYAL OF HORACE.

*A chant in Honour of Q. Horatius Flaccus:  
foretelling a Rebirth of the Classical Life and Spirit.  
The Poem is addressed to the Youth of Today.*

CHANT ROYAL OF HORACE.

Sulphur nascitur in insulis Æolis, inter Siciliam & Italiam.  
—PROPHETIÆ MERLINI. (1603)



Of Grecian glade and Latin lutestring sprung,  
Married to Ecstasy, I sing the heir  
Of Royal song, who with Apollo's tongue  
Made all the Latin shore his glory share.  
The Muses at his birth renewed the  
spring  
Of song, and set the world  
a-wondering  
That Sappho's and Alcæus' son should speak  
Till Italy had no lonely, songless peak,  
The Argive Coast syrened so wantonly:  
Italy had no sadly-silent creek  
That knew not songs of Grecian ecstasy.

Great Cæsar's victories from Barbarians wrung ;  
    The Panic revel and the torches' glare ;  
The Triumph with its cowering captives strung  
    Together ; the victor's proudly laurelled hair ;  
        The sacrifice to Jove ; the ominous  
  wing  
            Of birds upon the left ; the loves that  
  sting ;  
The virgins' singing and the eunuchs' squeak ;  
The cup-boy's dulcet voice ; the wine-cup's reek ;  
    The pendulous-purple vines ; the ivory  
Of maidens' arms ! That race in joy were weak  
    That knew not songs of Grecian ecstasy !

There on the elms the loving grape-vines cling ;  
    While olives laughing greenly everywhere  
Into sweet song the Wonder-Spirit stung,  
    And Joy made common home with Romans  
  there.  
        There was no time for pining, none  
  to sing  
        Of heart-breaks : life was there, a  
  joyous thing :  
Death ! Love ! they knew – vast dramas from the  
  Greek  
Staged by the Gods, some Hero-Fate to wreak  
    To greater doom ! To Death's vast victory  
To lead the broken brow, the pallid cheek,  
    That knew not songs of Grecian ecstasy !

The torch of Time upon the path hath slung  
    His eternal Light again. Life shall be fair  
Anew : vaster than Roman songs be sung,  
    Petitions prouder than a nations prayer  
        Assault the Gods ! The Serpent of  
  the Ring  
        Hath all-consumed his tail. A huge  
  new King  
Stands with the Ankh : the Spirit's wind grows bleak,  
The sky is storm-dark, but a golden-streak  
    Dawns in the West gold-orange. The lost  
  key  
Fell from the revening Eagle's hated beak  
    That knew not songs of Grecian ecstasy.

The five-rayed star on heaven's height is hung,  
    The jest of Jove, who holds the Upper Air.  
Woe to the fools that fled, the clowns that clung  
    In dawn's despite to their uncouth despair !  
        Awake ! What David holds a world  
  in sling ?  
        Wait ! In a moment will he bend  
  the string ?  
Oh, hear ye not even now that world-stone creak  
In agony ? O ye pious fools, ye sleek  
    Sycophants ! It is dawn at last ; and ye  
Stay staring at earth's mud, ye blind and meek  
    That knew not songs of Grecian ecstasy !

My song hath strayed; not wantonly. A rung  
Descends from the high Heaven: a passion-  
flare

Of ecstasy illumines the world of dung  
Wherein we have wallowed: die or  
dare!

This is no hour for hope or dallying:  
The day shall pass; a sudden night  
may bring

No single song. Let your souls' ribs be teak!

Woe unto those whose souls shall lapse and leak!

Oh, hear! The word is said: the song set  
free.

The day is passed of those who pine and peek,  
That knew not songs of Grecian ecstasy.

Some fruitful soils my seeds may fall among;  
Some God may lurk in some dark hidden  
lair,

Unknowing of his God-head, blithe and young;

Some idle loungee in the sunlight's glare.

To him I call aloud: oh, let him fling

His manhood wide! His God-head  
menacing

Let him assume! No fate shall let him sneak

To Heaven a sniveling Saint! Oh, he shall gleek

At Gods, and sieze our customs for a fee

For old Oblivion, in an age oblique

That knew not songs of Grecian ecstasy.

