

NIGHT-SONG OF BACCHUS.

Bacchus, accompanied by Pan and Silenus, passes through the woods upon an Autumn Night. He sings his Dithyrambic Song of Wine and Love.

He tells of his Mission and of the Impending Ecstasy of the Earth. The song ends with the Noon of Night.

NIGHT-SONG OF BACCHUS.



Leopards' eyes glow
In the underbrush of woods
As night falls slow
Upon her multitudes.

All her songs are mine,
All her stars are ours :
Mine is her wine,
Ours are her flowers.

Ring me a wreath,
O Bacchantes mine,
While the tigers' teeth
Are closing on the vine.

Who shall asperse us
 Among all mankind?
Know they my thyrsus
 When I be inclined?

I am god-drunken
 —Autumn mast and must—
When the sun is sunken
 The earth is driven dust.

Roll me a stave,
 Silenus and Pan!
Man is my slave;
 I am a Man.

Tigers ho! my tympan!
 Sway, my cymbals ho!
All mine is man's,
 Man's all below.

The red flame of vision
 From the lees of wine
Is mine, is Elysian,
 Is mine! is mine!

Pentheus, rude
 At my Mysteries,
Was torn and chewed,
 Wine, O my lees !

The Autumn sun is sunken
 Behind the ivy leaves :
I, wet and drunken,
 Come with the sheaves.

Harvest disdaining,
 Mine is the wine !
Lees drown-draining :
 The wine is mine !

Pan, come between us !
 Silenus, here !
Hither Silenus !
 Pan, dost hear ?

Lean o' my shoulder,
 Darling of the must !
Never grow older !
 Take me on trust !

Come, see my cars run
 Greased by the vine !
I make the stars run
 Dripping with wine !

Free men for Liber !
 Dionysus Ho !
From Thamesis to Tiber,
 From Padua to Po !

I was of Khem,
 And I was a Greek,
And I love them
 That bouse without a leak.

Swill it ! transmute it !
 Hearken to my drums !
Never dispute it :
 Take it as it comes !

Hymen I father !
 When ye swim in wine,
My spirit is to gather ;
 I am thine, and thine !

Ah, Night my sweetest !
 Stay yet with me !
When ye are fleetest
 Ye hold most ecstasy !

So, sweet my slaves !
 Masters of the must !
Sing me my staves !
 Set my horns upthrust !

Sing so the Moon !
 I am the Sun !
Day comes too soon,
 Too soon night is done.

All the stars are mine !
 Bacchantes, hear !
Mine is your wine,
 With the kiss behind the ear !

Ho ! for Bacchanalia
 Whereto to boast and bouse,
In the penetralia
 Of my forest house !

Come, O my starry
 Ones of wood and spring!
Come, ye here may marry,
 Love and swill and sing!

Borne by my beasts,
 Tamed to my cars,
I lighted all the East's
 Ecstasy of stars.

They called me never;
 But Dionysus came,
Whence earth forever
 Is lighted by my flame.

I was the new god
 Of wine and ecstasy;
Now I am the true god
 Of the Great Sea

Ho! It is ended!
 Night is fully come:
With night I am blended;
 With night I am dumb.

*So down through the woods
Dionysus came ;
All their multitudes
Bowed at his name.*

*Night fell slowly ;
The song arose : and far
Fell his light, the holy
Murmur of a Star.*