

*The Neophyte*¹

TO-NIGHT I tread the unsubstantial way
 That looms before me, as the thundering night
 Falls on the ocean : I must stop, and pray
 One little prayer, and then—what bitter fight
 Flames at the end beyond the darkling goal ?
 These are my passions that my feet must tread ;
 'This is my sword, the fervour of my soul ;
 This is my Will, the crown upon my head.
 For see ! the darkness beckons : I have gone,
 Before this terrible hour, towards the gloom,
 Braved the wild dragon, called the tiger on
 With whirling cries of pride, sought out the tomb
 Where lurking vampires batted, and my steel
 Has wrought its splendour through the gates of death.
 My courage did not falter : now I feel
 My heart beat wave-wise, and my throat catch breath
 As if I choked ; some horror creeps between
 The spirit of my will and its desire,
 Some just reluctance to the Great Unseen
 That coils its nameless terrors, and its dire
 Fear round my heart ; a devil cold as ice
 Breathes somewhere, for I feel his shudder take
 My veins : some deadlier asp or cockatrice
 Slimes in my senses : I am half awake,
 Half automatic, as I move along
 Wrapped in a cloud of blackness deep as hell,
 Hearing afar some half-forgotten song
 As of disruption ; yet strange glories dwell
 Above my head, as if a sword of light,
 Rayed of the very Dawn, would strike within
 The limitations of this deadly night
 That folds me for the sign of death and sin—

¹ This poem describes the Initiation of the *true* 'Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn' in its spiritual aspect.