



THE SOUL OF OSIRIS

THE SOUL OF OSIRIS

A HISTORY

BY

ALEISTER CROWLEY

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
PROLOGUE	vii
THE COURT OF THE PROFANE :	
FAME.....	3
THE ALTAR OF ARTEMIS.....	4
TO RICHARD WAGNER	9
"THE TWO EMOTIONS"	10
ASMODEL	11
"THE SONNET"	16
JEZEBEL. PART I.....	18
PART II.....	24
WEDLOCK.....	28
LOVE AT PEACE.....	29
LOT	33
SONNET FOR GERALD KELLEY'S JEZEBEL.....	38
THE MAY QUEEN.....	39
A SAINT'S DAMNATION	43
"MAN Y WATERS CANNOT QUENCH LOVE"	45
LOVE. MELANCHOLY, DESPAIR.....	47
THE GATE OF THE SANCTUARY :	
"THE TWO MINDS"	53
"THE TWO WISDOMS"	54
"THE TWO LOVES"	55
TO LAURA.....	56
THE NAMELESS QUEST	59
"A RELIGIOUS BRINGING-UP"	76
"THE LAW OF CHANGE"	77
SYNTHESIS.....	78

	PAGE
THE HOLY PLACE :	
THE NEOPHYTE	85
THE NAME.....	88
CERBERUS.....	91
THE EVOCATION	95
“THE ROSE AND THE CROSS”.....	99
HAPPINESS	100
THE HOLY OF HOLIES :	
THE PALACE OF THE WORLD	103
THE MOUNTAIN CHRIST	107
TO ALLAN MACGREGOR	111
THE ROSICRUCIAN	112
THE ATHANOR.....	115
THE CHANT TO BE SAID OR SUNG UNTO OUR	
LADY ISIS.....	123
A LITANY.....	125

PROLOGUE.

OBSESSION.

TO CHARLES BAUDELAIRE.

“ Car ce que ta bouche cruelle
 Eparpille en l'air,
 Monstre assassin, c'est ma cervelle,
 Mon sang et ma chair ! ”

THY brazen forehead, and its lustre gloom,
 Great angel of Night's legion-chosen chief,
 Beam on me like the hideous-fronted tomb,
 Whereon are graven strange words of misbelief;
 Thy brazen forehead, and its lustre gloom.

Sinister eyes, you burn into my breast,
 Creating an infernal cavern of woe,
 Where strange sleek leopards lash them in unrest,
 And furtive serpents crawling to and fro—
 Sinister eyes, you burn into my breast!

All hell, all destinies of death are written
 Like litanies blaspheming in those eyes;
 And where the lightning of high God hath smitten,
 Lie the charred brands of monstrous infamies,
 Wherein all destinies of death are written.

Thou cam'st to obsess me first that Easter Eve,
 When, from the contemplation of His pain,
I turned to look into my own heart's heave,
 And saw the bloody nails made fast again.
Thou cam'st to obsess me first that Easter Eve!

The lustre of old jet was over thee,
 And through thy body coursed the scented blood ;
Thy flesh was full of amorous ecstasy :
 Polished, and gloomier than some black full flood,
The lustre of old jet was over thee !

In thy great brazen blackness I am bathed ;
 Through all thy veins, like curses, my blood runs ;
In all thy flesh my naked bones are swathed,
 My womb is pregnant with mad moons and suns.
In thy great brazen blackness I am bathed !

Imminent over me thy hatred hangs,
 Thy slow blood trickles on my swollen sides,
Thy curdling purple where those poison-fangs
 Struck, slays desire and only death abides.
Imminent over me thy hatred hangs !

Thy jet smooth body clung to mine awhile,
 Descending like the thunder-pregnant Night,
Ominous, black, thy secret cruel smile
 Lured me. We lay like death ; until the light
Thy jet smooth body clung to mine awhile !

Thou wast a lion as an angel then,
 In copper-glowing lands that gnaws the prey
He has regotten from the tribes of men.
 We lay like passion all that deadly day—
Thou wast a lion as an angel then!

Great angel of the brazen brows, great lover,
 Great hater of my body as my soul,
To whom I gave my life and love thrice over,
 Fill me one last caress—the poison-bowl!
Great angel of the brazen brows, great lover!

THE COURT OF THE PROFANE.

FAME.

O IF these words were swords, and I had might
From some old prophet in whose tawny hair
The very breath of the Jehovah were
To smite the Syrian, and to smite, and smite,
And splash the sun's face with the blood, for spite
Of his downgoing, till I had made fair
All glories of my master, I could bear
To sink myself in the abundant night.

O if these words were lightnings, and their flame
Deluged the world, and drowned the seed of shame
In these ill waters where alone Truth's ark
May float, where only lovers may embark,
I were contented to abandon fame
And live with love for ever in the dark.

THE ALTAR OF ARTEMIS.

WHERE, in the coppice, oak and pine
And mystic yew and elm are found,
Sweeping the skies, that grow divine
With the dark wind's despairing sound,
The wind that roars from the profound,
And smites the mountain-tops, and calls
Mute spirits to black festivals,
And feasts in valleys iron-bound,
Desolate crags, and barren ground;—
There in the strong storm-shaken grove
Swings the pale censer-fire for love.

The foursquare altar, rightly hewn,
And overlaid with beaten gold,
Stands in the gloom; the stealthy tune
Of singing maidens overbold
Desires mad mysteries untold,
With strange eyes kindling, as the fleet
Implacable untiring feet
Weave mystic figures manifold
That draw down angels to behold
The moving music, and the fire
Of their intolerable desire.

For, maddening to fiercer thought,
The fiery limbs requicken, wheel
In formless furies, subtly wrought
Of swifter melodies than steel
That flashes in the fight: the peal
Of amorous laughters choking sense,
And madness kissing violence,
Rings like dead horsemen; bodies reel
Drunken with motion; spirits feel
The strange constraint of gods that dip
From Heaven to mingle lip and lip.

The gods descend to dance; the noise
Of hungry kissings, as a swoon,
Faints for excess of its own joys,
And mystic beams assail the moon,
With flames of their infernal noon;
While the smooth incense, without breath,
Spreads like some scented flower of death,
Over the grove; the lover's boon
Of sleep shall steal upon them soon,
And lovers' lips, from lips withdrawn,
Seek dimmer bosoms till the dawn.

Yet on the central altar lies
The sacrament of kneaded bread,
With blood made one, the sacrifice
To those, the living, who are dead—
Strange gods and goddesses, that shed

6 THE SOUL OF OSIRIS.

Monstrous desires of secret things
Upon their worshippers, from wings
 One lucent web of light, from head
 One labyrinthine passion-fed
Palace of love, from breathing rife
With secrets of forbidden life.

But not the sunlight, nor the stars,
 Nor any light but theirs alone,
Nor iron masteries of Mars,
 Nor Saturn's misconceiving zone,
 Nor any planet's may be shone,
Within the circle of the grove,
Where burn the sanctities of love:
 Nor may the foot of man be known,
 Nor evil eyes of mothers thrown
On maidens that desire the kiss
Only of maiden Artemis.

But horned and huntress from the skies,
 She bends her lips upon the breeze,
And pure and perfect in her eyes,
 Burn magical virginity's
 Sweet intermittent sorceries.
When the slow wind from her sweet word
In all their conchéd ears is heard.
 And like the slumber of the seas,
 There murmur through the holy trees
The kisses of the goddess keen,
And sighs and laughters caught between.

For, swooning at the fervid lips
Of Artemis, the maiden kisses
Sob, and the languid body slips
Down to enamelled wildernesses.
Fallen and loose the shaken tresses ;
Fallen the sandal and girdling gold,
Fallen the music manifold
Of moving limbs and strange caresses,
And deadly passion that possesses
The magic ecstasy of these
Mad maidens, tender as blue seas.

Night spreads her yearning pinions,
The baffled day sinks blind to sleep ;
The evening breeze outswoons the sun's
Dead kisses to the swooning deep.
Upsoars the moon ; the flashing steep
Of heaven is fragrant for her feet ;
The perfume of the grove is sweet
As slumbering women furtive creep
To bosoms where small kisses weep,
And find in fervent dreams the kiss
Most memoried of Artemis.

Impenetrable pleasure dies
Beneath the madness of new dreams ;
The slow sweet breath is turned to sighs
More musical than many streams
Under the moving silver beams,

Fretted with stars, thrice woven across.
White limbs in amorous slumber toss,
 Like sleeping foam, whose silver gleams
 On motionless dark seas ; it seems
As if some gentle spirit stirred
Their lazy brows with some swift word.

So, in the secret of the shrine,
 Night keeps them nestled, so the gloom
Laps them in waves as smooth as wine,
 As glowing as the fiery womb
 Of some young tigress, dark as doom,
And swift as sunrise. Love's content
Builds its own mystic monument,
 And carves above its vaulted tomb
 The Phoenix on her fiery plume,
To their own souls to testify
Their kisses' immortality.

TO RICHARD WAGNER.

(BEFORE HEARING "SIEGFRIED.")

O MASTER of the ring of love, O lord
Of all desires, and king of all the stars,
O strong magician, who with locks and bars
Dost seal that kingdom silent and abhorred
That stretches out and binds with iron cord
The hopes and lives of men, and makes and mars!
O thou thrice noble for the deadly scars
That answered vainly thy victorious sword!

Wagner! creator of a world of light
As beautiful as God's, bend down to me,
And whisper me the secrets of thy heart,
That I may follow and dispel the night,
And fight life through, a comrade unto thee,
Under Love's banner with the sword of Art!

“ THE TWO EMOTIONS.”

HOW barren is the Valley of Delight!
Swift the gaunt hounds that nose the warm
close trail

Of all my love's content; in vain I veil
My secret of remorse; from their keen sight
And scent my poor deception takes to flight.
I borrow perfume from young loves waxed pale;
I borrow music from the nightingale.
In vain: she knows me, that I hate her quite.

Not altogether: in my patchwork brain
Some rag of passion tears its woof asunder.
Strange, that its own insatiable pain
Should find an opiate in her eyes of wonder!
Yes, though I hate her well enough to kill,
I know that then my soul would love her still.

ASMODEL.

CALL down that star whose tender eyes
Were on thy bosom at thy birth!
Call, one long passionate note that sighs!
Call, till its beauty bend to earth,
Meet thee and lift thee and devise
Strange loves within the gleaming girth,
And kisses underneath the star
Where on her brows its seven rays are.

Call her, the maiden of thy sleep,
And fashion into human shape
The whirling fountains fiery and deep,
The incense-columns that bedrape
Her glimmering limbs, when shadows creep
Among blue tresses that escape
The golden torque that binds her hair,
Whose swarthy splendours drench the air.

She comes, she comes, the spirit glances
In quick delight to hold her kiss;
The fuming air shimmers and dances;
The moonlight's trembling ecstasies

Swoon, and her soul, as my soul, trances,
 Knowing no longer aught that is ;
Only united, moving, mixed,
A music infinitely fixed.

Music that throbs, and soars, and burns,
 And breaks the possible, to dwell
One moving monotone, nor turns,
 Making hell heaven, and heaven hell,
The steady impossible song that yearns
 And brooks no mortal in its swell—
This monotone immortal lips
Make in our infinite eclipse !

Formless, above all shape and shade ;
 Lampless, beyond all light and flame ;
Timeless, above all age and grade ;
 Moveless, beyond the mighty name ;
A mystic mortal and a maid,
 Filled with all things to fill the same,
To overflow the shores of God,
Mingling our proper period.

The agony is passed : behold
 How shape and light are born again ;
How emerald and starry gold
 Burn in the midnight ; how the pain
Of our incredible marriage-fold
 And bed of birthless travail wane ;
And how our molten limbs divide,
And self and self again abide.

The agony of extreme joy,
And horror of the infinite blind
Passions that sear us and destroy,
Rebuilding for the deathless mind
A deathless body, whose alloy
Is gold and fire, whose passions find
The tears of their caress a dew,
Fiery, to make creation new.

This agony and bloody sweat,
This scarring torture of desire,
Refine us, madden us, and set
The feast of unbegotten fire
Before our mouths, that mingle yet
In this; the mighty-moulded lyre
Of many stars still strikes above
Chords of the mastery of love.

This subtle fire, this secret flame,
Flashes between us as she goes
Beyond the night, beyond the Name,
Back to her unsubstantial snows;
Cold, glittering, intense, the same
Now, yesterday, for aye! she glows
No woman of my mystic bed;
A star, far off, forgotten, dead.

Only to me looks out for ever
From her cold eyes a fire like death;
Only to me her breasts can never
Lose the red brand that quickeneth;

Only to me her eyelids sever
And lips respire her equal breath ;
Still in the unknown star I see
The very god that is of me.

The day's pale countenance is lifted,
The rude sun's forehead he uncovers ;
No soft delicious clouds have drifted,
No wing of midnight's bird that hovers ;
Yet still the hard blind blue is rifted,
And still my star and I as lovers
Yearn to each other through the sky
With eyes half closed in ecstasy.

Night, Night, O mother Night, descend !
O daughter of the sleeping sea !
O dusk, O sister-spirit, lend
Thy wings, thy shadows, unto me !
O mother, mother, mother, bend
And shroud the world in mystery
That secrets of our bed forbidden
Cover their faces, and be hidden.

O steadfast, O mysterious bride,
O woman, O divine and dead !
O wings immeasurably wide,
O star, O sister of my bed !
O living lover, at my side
Clinging, the spring, the fountain-head
Of musical slow waters, white
With thousand-folded rays of light !

Come! Once again I call, I call,
I call, O perfect soul, to thee,
With chants, and murmurs mystical,
And whispers wiser than the sea:
O lover, come to me! The pall
Of night is woven: fair and free,
Draw to my kisses, let thy breath
Mingle for love the wine of death.

“ THE SONNET.”

I.

THE solemn hour, and the magnetic swoon
 Of midnight in a poet's lonely hall!
 Grave spirits answer (angels if he call)
 The invocations of his lofty tune.
 Thus in his measures nature craves the boon
 To be reflected; and his rhymes appal
 Or charm mankind as tides that flow or fall,
 Waxes or wanes the tempestival moon.

Her course is measured in the sonnet's tether,
 Waxes the eight-fold ecstasy; exceeds
 The minor sestet, where some passion bleeds
 Or truth discourses: or eclipse may end,
 Proof against thought; but if man comprehend
 The stars in all their stations sing together.

II.

What power or fascination can there lie
 In this fair garden of the straight-kept rows,
 The sonnet? Surely some archangel knows
 Why, having written in mere ecstasy

One sonnet-thought, the metre cannot die
But urges, but compels me to compose
More and still more, and still my spirit goes
Striving up glittering steps of symphony.

There is an angel who is guardian.
Surely her wings are rosy, and her feet
Black as the wind of frost; but oh! her face!
Whoso may know it is no more a man,
But walks with God, and sees the Lady sweet
Whose body was the vehicle of grace.

III.

Eternal beauty in eternal truth,
Isis! And Thoth, the scribe of destiny,
And Mary's excellent virginity!
Ye are the witness of the ageless youth
That crowns the sonnet. In your wondrous eyes
Lie hidden all the secrets of the world,
And as the lightning of your look is hurled
So glean I something of life's harmonies.

Look then upon me! Let my insight pierce
The clouds of this material universe
Unto your splendour that no mortal eye
May see and live. Even so, how small the price!
My soul accepts its own sweet sacrifice:
Let me but strike one perfect chord—and die.

JEZEBEL.

PART I.

A LION'S mane, a leopard's skin
Across my dusty shoulders thrown ;
A swart fierce face, with eyes where sin
Lurks like a serpent by a stone.
A man driven forth by lust to seek
Rest from himself on Carmel's peak.

A prophet with wild hair behind,
Streaming in fiery clusters! Yea,
Tangled with vehemence of the wind,
And knotted with the tears that slay ;
And all my face parched up and dried,
And all my body crucified.

Ofttimes the Spirit of the Lord
Descends and floods me with his breath ;
My words are fashioned as a sword,
My voice is like the voice of death.
The thunder of the Spirit's wings
Brings terror to the hearts of kings.

THE COURT OF THE PROFANE. 19

Anon, and I am driven out
In desert places by desire ;
My mouth is salt and dry ; I doubt
If hell hath such another fire ;
If God's damnation can devise
A lust to match these agonies.

The desert wind my body burns,
The voice of flesh consumes my soul ;
My body towards the city turns,
My spirit seeks its fierier goal ;
In wells of heaven to quench my thirst,
And take God's hand among the first.

I conquered self, I grew at last
A prophet chosen of the Lord ;
I blew the trumpet's iron blast
That called on Zimri Omri's sword ;
My voice inflamed the fiery steel
That was to smite upon Jezreel.

And now, I haste from yonder sands,
With fervour filled, to say God's doom
To Ahab of the bloody hands,
The spoiler of his father's tomb,
The slayer of the vineyard king.
God's judgment, and his fate, I bring.

The city gleams afar, I see
Samarina's white walls on high ;

The mountains echo back to me
The vengeful murmur of the sky ;
All heaven and earth on me attend
To prophesy the tyrant's end.

The gates are closed because of night,
Whose heavy breath infects the air ;
The dog-star gleams, a devilish light :
I thought I saw behind me glare
The eyes of fiends ; I thought I heard
An evil laugh, a mocking word.

The gates swing open at The Name,
Without a warder roused from sleep ;
I pass, with face of burning flame,
That is not quenched, although I weep.
(For even my tears are tears of fire,
For loathing, madness, and desire.)

Ah God! the traps for fervent feet !
The morrow beacons, and I came
By where the golden groves of wheat
In summer glories fiercely flame ;
To those white courts, by princes trod,
Where Ahab sat, and mocked at God.

Where Ahab sat, but lo! I saw
No king, no tyrant to be curst ;
But she, who filled me with blind awe,
She, for whose blood my thin veins thirst ;

The blossom of a painted mouth
And bare breasts tintured with the South.

For lo! the harlot Jezebel,
Her hands dropped perfume, and her tongue
(A flame from the dark heart of hell,
The ivory-barred mouth, that stung
With unimaginable pangs)
Shot out at me, and Hell fixed fangs.

Her purple robes, her royal crown,
The jewelled girdle of her waist,
Her feet with murder splashed, and brown
With the sharp lips that fawn and taste,
The crimson snakes that minister
To those unwearying lust of her.

And all her woman's scent did drift
A steam of poison through the air;
The haze of sunshine seems to lift
And toil in tangles of black hair,
The hair that waves, and winds, and bites,
And glistens with unholy lights.

For lo! she saw me, and beheld
My trembling lips curled back to curse;
Laughed with strong scorn, whose music knelled
The empire of God's universe.
And on my haggard face upturned
She spat! Ah God! how my cheek burned!

Then, as a man betrayed, and doomed
 Already, I arose and went,
And wrestled with myself, consumed
 With passion for that sacrament
Of shame. From that day unto this
My cheek desires that hideous kiss.

Her hate, her scorn, her cruel blows,
 Fill my whole life, consume my breath ;
Her red-fanged hatred in me glows ;
 I lust for her, and hell, and death ;
I see that ghastly look, and yearn
Toward the brands of her that burn.

Sleep shuns me ; dreams divide the night
 (My parched throat thirsty for her veins),
That she and I with deep delight
 Suck from death's womb infernal pains,
Whose fire consumes, destroys, devours
Through night's insatiable hours.

And altogether filled with love,
 And altogether filled with sin,
The little sparks and noises move
 About the softness of her skin.
Her pleasures and her passions purr,
For the delight I have of her.

Aching with all the pangs of night
 My shuddering body swoons ; my eyes

Absorb her eyelids' lazy light,
And read her bosom to devise
Fresh blossoms of the heart of hell,
And secret joys of Jezebel.

Her lips are fastened to my breast
To suck out blood in feverish tides ;
The token of her I possessed
Still on my withered cheek abides.
Thus slowly the desire grows
To kill and have her yet—who knows ?

PART II.

I KNOW. When Ramoth-Gilead's field
Grew bloody with hot ranks of dead,
I smote amain with sword and shield,
My brows with mingled blood were red;
And on my cheek the kiss of hell,
The hatred of my Jezebel.

I waited many days. At last
The rushing of a chariot grew
Frightful through all the city vast,
Men were afraid. But I—I knew
Jehu was here, whose sword should dip
Deep in my love's adulterous lip.

The spirit filled me. And behold!
I saw her dead stare to the skies;
I came to her; she was not cold,
But burning with old infamies.
On her incestuous mouth I fell,
And lost my soul for Jezebel.

I followed him afoot, afire;
Beneath her window he drew rein;
She looked forth, clad in glad attire,

Haggard and hateful, once again ;
And taunted him. His bastard blood
Quailed, but his violent soul withstood.

He blenched, and then with eyes of flame,
“Who is on my side? Who?” he said.
Three eunuchs, passionless, grown tame,
Grinned from behind her laughing head.
“Throw down that woman!” And my breath
Caught as they flung her out to death.

I think I died that moment. He,
Foaming for vengeance and blood-lust,
Laughed his coarse laugh of hideous glee.
Her sweet bad body in the dust
He trampled. Royal from the womb,
A martyred murderess lacks a tomb!

A tigress woman, clad with sin,
And shod with infamy, who pressed
The bloody winepress of my skin,
And plucked the purple of my breast—
Her lovers in their hearts shall keep
Her memory passionate and deep.

They cast her forth on Naboth's field
Still living, in her harlot's dress ;
Her belly stript, her thighs concealed,
For shame's sake and for love's no less.
Night falls ; the gaping crowds abide
No longer by her stiffening side.

I crept like sleep toward the place
That held for me her evil head ;
I bent like sin above her face
That dying she might kiss me dead.
I whispered: "Jezebel." She turned,
And her deep eyes with hatred burned.

"Ah! prophet, come to mock at me
And gloat on mine exceeding pain?"
"Nay, but to give my soul to thee,
And have thee spit at me again!"
She smiled—I know she smiled—she sighed,
Bit my lips through, and drank, and died!

Her murders and her blasphemies,
Her whoredoms, God has paid at last ;
Upon my bosom close she lies,
Her carnal spirit holds me fast.
My blood, my infamy, my pain,
Seal my subjection and her reign.

My veins poured out her marriage cup,
For holy water her cruel tongue ;
For blessing of white hands raised up,
These perfumed infamies unsung ;
For God's breath, her sharp tainted breath ;
For marriage bed, the bed of death.

The hounds that scavenge, fierce and lean,
Snarl in the moonlight ; in the sky

The vulture hangs, a ghost unclean ;
The lewd hyæna's sleepless eye
Darts through the distance ; these admit
My lordship over her—and it.

The host is lifted up. Behold
The vintage spilt, the broken bread !
I feast upon the cruel cold
Pale body that was ripe and red.
Only, her head, her palms, her feet,
I kissed all night, and did not eat.

So, and not otherwise, the word
Of God was utterly fulfilled.
So, and not otherwise. I heard
Her spirit cry, by death not stilled :
“ My sin is perfect in thy blood,
And thou and I have conquered God.”

Now let me die, at last desired,
At last beloved of thee my queen ;
Now let me die, with blood attired,
Thy servant naked and obscene ;
To thy white skull, thy palms, thy feet,
Clinging, dead, infamous, complete.

Now let me die, to mix my soul
With thy red soul, to join our hands,
To weld us in one perfect whole,
To link us with desirous bands.
Now let me die, to mate in hell
With thee, O harlot Jezebel.

WEDLOCK.

A SONNET.

I SAW the Russian peasants build a ring
Of glowing embers of the bubbling pine.
In the green heart o' th' salamander line
They scatter roses. Now the youngsters spring
Within, who with hard-shut eyes hope to bring
From out the fiery circle one divine
Blossom of rose, as from a poisonous mine
Gold comes to gird the palace of a king.

Envious I sprang—and found the last rose gone.
So in the fiery ring of wedlock, blind,
Mad, one may leap, no rose perhaps to find
(Or, if no rose, good fortune finds no thorn),
But—mark the difference—palpable and plain
Rose or no rose, one leaps not out again.

LOVE AT PEACE.

THE valleys, that are splendid
With sun ere day is ended
And love-lutes take to tune,
See joyless and unfriended
The perfect bowstring bended,
Whose bow is called the moon.
They see the waters slacken
And all the sky's blue blacken,
While in the yellow bracken
Love lies in death or swoon.

The stars arise and brighten ;
The summer lightnings lighten,
Faint and as midnight mute ;
And far white snowfields tighten
The iron bands that frighten
No fairy's tender foot.
Across the stiller river
Stray flowers of ice may shiver,
Before the day deliver
The murmur of its lute.

The sleep of bird and flower
Proclaims that Heaven has power
 To guard its gentlest child.
The lover knows the hour,
And goes with dew for dower
 To wed in woodland wild.
The silvern grasses shake,
And through the startled brake
Glides the awakened snake,
 Untamable and mild.

The song of stars; the wail
Of women wild and pale,
 Forlorn and not forsaken;
The tremulous nightingale;
The waters wan that fail
 By frost-love overtaken,
Make sacred all the valley;
And softly, musically,
The breezes lull and rally,
 The pine stirs and is shaken.

Beneath whose sombre shade
I hold a lazy maid
 In chaste arms and too tender.
Lo! she is fair! God said;
And saw through the deep glade
 How sweet she was and slender.
But I—could I behold her
Curved shapeliness of shoulder?

I, whose strong arms enfold her
Immaculate surrender.

Pure as the dawns that quicken
On snow-topped mountains stricken
By first gray light that grows,
By beams that gather, thicken,
A web of fairy ticken,
To make a fairy rose :
Pure as the seas that lave
With phosphorescent wave
The sombre architrave
Of Castle No-man-knows.

Pure as the dreams, undreamt
(That men have in contempt,
That wise men yearn to see),
Of angel forms exempt
From mockeries that tempt
Who fly about the lea ;
Proclaiming things unheard,
Unknown to brightest bird,
Things, whose unspoken word
Is utmost secrecy.

So pure, so pale we lie,
Like angels eye to eye,
Like lovers lip to lip.
So, the elect knight, I
Keep vigil to the sky,
While the dumb moments slip.

So she, my bride, my queen,
So virginal, so keen,
Swoons, while the moon-rays lean
 To fan their silver ship.

No sleep, but precious kisses
In those pale wildernesses,
 Mark the dead hours of night,
No sleep so sweet as this is,
Whose pulse of purple blisses
 Beats calm and cool and light.
No life so fair with roses,
No day so swift to close is ;
No cushion so reposes
 Fair love so sweet and slight.

Sleep greets the morn and takes us ;
The wood that wonders makes us
 Soft noises heard above.
The sunny snake forsakes us,
The noon sun lastly wakes us,
 To watch the wooing dove ;
And day draws on delighted
To leave us there benighted,
Once more divinely plighted
 In perfect moon of love.

LOT.

“And while he lingered . . . they brought him forth, and set him without the city.”—Gen. xix. 16.

TURN back from safety, in my love abide,
Whose lips are warm as when, a virgin bride
I clung to thee ashamed and very glad,
Whose breasts are lordlier for the pain they had,
Whose arms cleave closer than thy spouse's own!
Thy spouse—O lover, kiss me, and atone!
All my veins burst for love, my ripe breasts beat
And lay their bleeding blossoms at thy feet!
Spurn me no more! O bid these strangers go;
Turn to my lips till their cup overflow;
Hurt me with kisses, kill me with desire,
Consume me and destroy me with the fire
Of bleeding passion straining at the heart,
Touched to the core by sweetnesses that smart
Bitten by fiery snakes, whose poisonous breath
Swoons in the midnight, and dissolves to death!
Ah! let me perish so, and not endure
Thy falsehood who have known thy love was sure,
Built up by sighs a palace of long years—
Lo! it was faery, and the spell of tears

Dissolves it utterly. O bid them go,
These white-faced boys, where calmer rivers flow,
And birds less passionate invoke the spring,
And seek their loves with weaker, wearier wing.
Turn back from safety—Let God's rivers pour
Brimstone and fire, and all his fountains roar
Lava and hail of hell upon my head,
So be he leave us altogether dead,
Burnt in that shameful whirlwind of his ire,
Consumed in one tall pyramid of fire
Whose bowers of flame shall tell the sky of God
How we despised his feet with thunder shod,
And conquered, clasping, all the host of death.
Turn to me, touch me, mix thy very breath
With mine to mingle floods of fiery dew
With flames of purple, like the sea shot through
With golden glances of a fiercer star.
Turn to me, bend above me ; you may char
These olive shoulders with an old-time kiss,
And fix thy mouth upon me for such bliss
Of sudden rage rekindled. Turn again,
And make delight the minister of pain,
And pain the father of a new delight,
And light a lamp of torture for the night
Too grievous to be borne without a cry
To rend the very bowels of the sky
And make the archangel gasp—a sudden pang,
Most like a traveller stricken by the fang
Of the black adder whose squat head springs up,
A flash of death, beneath a cactus cup.

Ah turn, my bosom for thy love is cold ;
My arms are empty, and my lips can hold
No converse with thee far away like this.
O for that communing pregnant with a kiss
That is reborn when lips are set together
To link our souls in one desirous tether,
And weld our very bodies into one.
Ah fiend Jehovah, what then have we done
To earn thy curse? Is love like ours too strong
To dwell before thee, and do thy throne no wrong?
Art thou grown jealous of the fiery band?
Lo! thou hast spoken, and thy strong command
Bade earth and air divide, and on the sea
Thy spirit moved—and thou must envy me!
Gird all thy godhead to destroy a man
Whose little moment is a single span,
Whose small desire is nothing—and thy power
Must root from out his bosom the fair flower
Of passion! Listen to thine own voice yet:
“A rich man many flocks and herds did get,
“And took the poor man’s lamb.” Thou art the man!
Our love must lie beneath thy bitter ban!
Thou petty, envious God! My king, be sure
His brute force shall not to the end endure;
Some stronger soul than thine shall wrest his crown
And thrust him from his own high heaven down
To some obscure forgetful hell. For me
Forsake thy hopes in him. We worship, we,
Rather the dear delights we know and hold;
The first cool kiss, within the water cold

That draws its music from some bubbling well,
Looks long, looks deadly, looks desirable,
The touch that fires, the next kiss, and the whole
Body embracing, symbol of the soul,
And all the perfect passion of an hour.
Turn to me, pluck that amaranthine flower,
And leave the doubtful blossoms of the sky!
You dare not kiss me! dare not draw you nigh
Lest I should lure you to remain! nor speak
Lest you should catch the blood within your cheek
Mantling. You dared enough—so long ago!—
When to my blossom body clean as snow
You pressed your bosom till desire was pain,
And—then—that midnight! you did dare remain
Though all my limbs were bloody with your mouth
That tore their flesh to satiate its drouth,
That was not thereby satisfied! And now
A pallid coward, with sly, skulking brow,
You must leave Sodom for your spouse's sake
Coward and coward and coward! who would take
The best flower of my life and leave me so,
Still loving you—Ah! weak—and turn to go
For fear of such a God! O blind! O fool!
To heed these strangers and to be the tool
Of their smooth lies and monstrous miracles.
O break this bondage and cast off their spells!
Five righteous! Thou a righteous man! A jest!
A righteous man—you always loved me best,
And even when lured by lips of wanton girls
Would turn away and sigh and touch my curls,

And slip half-conscious to the old embrace.
And now you will not let me see your face
Or hear your voice or touch you. Ah! the hour!
He moves. Come back, come back, my life's one
 flower!
Come back. One kiss before you leave me. So!
Stop—turn—one little kiss before you go;
It is my right—you must. Oh no! Oh no!

SONNET FOR GERALD KELLY'S
JEZEBEL.

L IFT up thine head, disastrous Jezebel!
Fire and black stars are melted in thine hair
That curls to Hell, as in Satanic prayer ;
Thy mouth is heavy with its riper smell
Than clustered pomegranates beside a well ;
The cruel savour of thy lust lies there,
That blood may tinge thy kisses unaware
To fill thy children with the hope of Hell.

O evil beauty! Heart of mystery
Wherein my being toils, and in the blood
Mixed with thy poison finds its subtle food,
Intoxicating my divinity!
Disdainful hands behind thee, I may take
What joys I will—but thou wilt not awake.

THE MAY QUEEN.

(OLD STYLE)

IT is summer and sun on the sea,
The twilight is drawn to the world:
We linger and laugh on the lea,
The light of my spirit with me,
Sharp limbs in close agony curled.

The noise of the music of sleep,
The breath of the wings of the night,
The song of the magical deep,
The sighs of the spirits that weep,
Make murmur to tune our delight.

Slow feet are our measures that move ;
Swift songs are more soft than the breeze ;
Our mouths are made mute for our love ;
Our eyes are made soft as the dove ;
We mingle and move as the seas.

The light of the passionate dawn
That kissed us, and would not awaken,
Grew golden and bold on the lawn,
The rays of the sun are withdrawn
At last, and the blossoms are shaken.

Oh, fragrant the breeze is that stirs
The grasses around us that lean!
Oh, sweet is the whisper that purrs
From those wonderful lips that are hers,
From the passionate lips of a queen.

A queen is my lover, I say,
With a crown of the lilies of light—
For a maiden they crowned her in May,
For the Queen of the Daughters of Day
That are flowers of the forest of Night.

They crowned her with lilies and blue,
They crowned her with yellow and roses,
They gave her a sceptre of rue,
And a girdle of laurel and yew,
And a basket of pansies in posies.

They led her with songs by the stream,
They brought her with tears to the river,
They danced as the maze of a dream,
They kissed her to roses and cream,
And they cried, "Let the queen live for ever!"

They took her, with all of the flowers
They had girded her with for God's daughter;
They cast her from amorous bowers
To the river, the horrible powers
Of the Beast that lurks down by the Water!

My way was more swift than a bow
That flings out its barb to the night :
My sword struck the infinite blow
That smote him, and blackened the flow
Of the amorous river of light.

I plunged in the stream, and I drew
My queen from the clasp of the water ;
I crowned her with roses and blue,
With yellow and lilies anew ;
I called her my love and God's daughter !

I gave her a sceptre of may,
I gave her a girdle of green,
I drew her to music and day,
I led her the beautiful way
To the land where the Winds lie between.

So still lingers sun upon sea,
Still twilight draws down to the world ;
The light of my spirit is she,
The soul of her love is in me ;
Lithe kisses with music are curled.

Like light on the meadows we dwell ;
Like twilight clings heart unto heart ;
Like midnight the depth of the spell
Our love weaves, and stronger than hell
The guards of our palace of art.

We are one as the dew that is drawn
By the sun from the sea: we are curled
In curves of delight and of dawn,
On the lone, the immaculate lawn,
Beyond the wild way of the world.

A SAINT'S DAMNATION.

YOU buy my spirit with those shameless eyes
That burn my soul, you loose the torrent stream
Of my desire, you make my lips your prize,

And on them burns the whole life's hope: you deem
You buy a heart; but I am well aware
How my damnation dwells in that supreme

Passion to feed upon your shoulders bare,
And pass the dewy twilight of our sin
In the intolerable flames of hair

That clothe my body from your head; you win
The devil's bargain; I am yours to kill,
Yours, for one kiss; my spirit for your skin!

O bitter love, consuming all my will!
O love destroying, that hast drained my life
Of all those fountains of dear blood that fill

My heart! O woman, would I call you wife?
Would I content you with one touch divine
To flood your spirit with the clinging strife

Of perfect passionate joy, the joy of wine,
The drunkenness of extreme pleasure, filled
From sin's amazing cup. Oh, mine, mine, mine,

Mine, if your kisses maddened me or killed,
Mine, at the price of my damnation deep,
Mine, if you will, as once your glances willed!

Take me, or break me, slay or sooth to sleep,
If only yours one hour, one perfect hour,
Remembrance and despair and hope to steep

In the infernal potion of that flower,
My poisonous passion for your blood! Behold!
How utterly I yield, how gladly dower

Our sin with my own spirit's quenched gold,
Clothe love with my own soul's immortal power,
Give thee my body as a fire to hold—
O love, no words, no songs—your breast my bower!

“MANY WATERS CANNOT
QUENCH LOVE.”

IN my distress I made complaint to Death :
Thy shadow strides across the starry air ;
Thou comest as a serpent unaware,
Striking love's heart and crushing out man's breath :
Thy destiny is even as God saith
To mark the impotence of human prayer,
Choke hope, sting all but Love ; and never care
If man or flower or sparrow perisheth.

Thee, I invoke thee, though no mercy move
Thy heart ! No power is to thy hate assigned
On love (sing, poets ! shrill, Pandean reeds !).
But me, look on me, how my bosom bleeds—
Invoke new power of cruelty ; be kind,
And ask authority to quench my love !

“La cour d’appel de la volonté de l’homme—
C’est le ventre!”—*Old proverb.*

The worst of meals is that we have to meet.
They trick my purpose and evade my will,
Remind my conscience that I love her still,
And pull my spirit from its lofty seat.
For I withdraw myself: my stealthy feet
Seek half-ashamed the alembic which I fill
To the epic-mark—one sonnet to distil,
In this poor miracle—my love to cheat.

Dinner clangs cheerily from my lady’s gong.
A man must eat in intervals of song!
Swift feet run back to hide my hate of her.
And then—that hate flies truant, as my thought
Rests (surely it beseems the overwrought)
And I am left her slave and minister.

LOVE, MELANCHOLY, DESPAIR.¹

DEEP melancholy—O, the child of folly!—
Looms on my brow, a perched ancestral bird;
Black are its plumes, its eyes are melancholy,
It speaks no word.

Like to a star, deep beauty's avatar
Pales in the dusky skies so far above:
Seven rays of gladness crown its passionate star,
One heart of love.

The fringing trees, marge of deep-throated seas,
Move as I walk: like spectres whispering
The spaces of them: let me leave the trees—
It is not spring!

Spring—no! but dying autumn fast and flying,
Sere leaves and frozen robins in my breast!
There is the winter—were I sure in dying
To find some rest!

¹ This poem is partially composed on Mr. Poe's scheme of verse—*vide* "The Philosophy of Composition."

There is a shallop—how the breakers gallop,
Grinding to dust the unresisting shore,
A moon-mad thought to wander in the shallop!
Act—think no more!

Pale as a ghost I leave the sounding coast,
The waters white with moonrise. I embark,
Float on to the horizon as a ghost,
Confront the dark.

The cadent curve of Dian seems to swerve,
Eluding helmcraft: let me drift away
Where sea and sky unite their clamorous curve
In praise of Day.

Is it an edge? Some spray-bechiselled ledge?
Some sentry platform to an under sky?
Let me drift onward to the azure edge—
I can but die!

The moon hath seen! An arrow cold and keen
Brings some cold being from the water chill,
Rises between me and the world—unseen,
Most terrible.

Dawns that unheard-of terror! Never a word of
The spells that chain ill spirits I remember.
And oh! my soul! What hands of ice unheard-of
Disturb, dismember!

It hath no shape ; and I have no escape !
It wraps around me, as a mist, despair.
Fear without sense and horror without shape
Most surely there !

O melancholy ! charming child of folly,
Where is thy comfort told without a word ?
Where are thy plumes, beloved melancholy,
Familiar bird ?

O emerald star, deep beauty's avatar,
Are thy skies dim ? What throne is thine above ?
Where is the crown of thee—thy sevenfold star,
My heart of love ?

Then from the clinging mist there came a singing,
A dirge re-echoes to the poet prayer :
“I am their child to whom thy soul is clinging,
I am Despair !”

THE GATE OF THE SANCTUARY.

“ THE TWO MINDS.”

“ THEY SHALL BE NO MORE TWAIN, BUT ONE
FLESH.”

WELL have I said, “ O God, Thou art, alone,
In many forms and faces manifest!
Thou, stronger than the universe, Thy throne!
Thou, calm in strength as the sea’s heart at rest!”
But I have also answered: “ Let the groan
Of this Thy world reach up to Thee, and wrest
Thy bloody sceptre: let the wild winds own
Man’s lordship, and obey at his behest!”

Man has two minds: the first beholding all,
As from a centre to the endless end:
The second reaches from the outer wall,
And seeks the centre. This I comprehend.
But in the first: “ I can—but what is worth?”
And in the second: “ I am dust and earth!”

“ THE TWO WISDOMS.”

SOPHIE! I loved her, tenderly at worst.
 Yet in my passion's highest ecstasy,
 When life lost pleasure in desire to die
 And never taste again the deadly thirst
 For those caresses; even then a curst
 Sick pang shot through me: looking afar on high,
 Beyond, I see $\text{£} \int \text{Æ} \pm$ in the sky.
 The pretty bubble of Love's pipe is burst!

Yea! through the portals of the dusky dawn
 I see the nameless Rose of Heaven unfold!
 Yea! through rent passion and desire withdrawn
 Burns in the East the far ephemeral gold.
 O Wisdom! Mother of my sorrow! Rise!
 And lift my love to thine immortal eyes!

“ THE TWO LOVES.”

WHAT is my soul? The shadow of my will.
What is my will? The sleeper's sigh at waking.
Osiris! Orient godhead! let me still
Rest in the dawn of knowledge, ever slaking
My lips and throat where yon rose-glimmering hill,
The Mountain of the East, its lips is taking
To Thy life-lips: I hear Thy keen voice thrill;
Arise and shine! the clouds of earth are breaking!

The clouds are parted: yes! And there above
I bathe in ether and self-shining light;
My soul is filled with the eternal love;
I am the brother of the Day and Night.
I AM! my spirit, and perhaps my mind!
But O my heart! I left thy love behind!

TO LAURA.

MISTRESS, I pray thee, when the wind
Exults upon the roaring sea,
Come to my bosom, kissed and kind,
And sleep upon the lips of me.

Dream on my breast of quiet days,
Kindled of slow absorbing fire.
Sleep, while I ponder on the ways
And secret paths of my desire.

Dream, while my restless brain probes deep
The mysteries of its magic power,
The secrets of forgotten sleep,
The birth of knowledge as a flower.

Slow and divine thy gentle breath
Woos my warm throat: my spirit flies
Beyond the iron walls of death,
And seeks strange portals, pale and wise.

My lips are fervent, as in prayer,
Thy lips are parted, as to kiss:
My hand is clenched upon the air,
Thy hand's soft touch, how sweet it is!

The wind is amorous of the sea,
The sea's large limbs to its embrace
Curl, and thy perfume curls round me,
An incense on my eager face.

I see, beyond all seas and stars,
The gates of hell, the paths of death
Open: unclasp the surly bars,
Before the voice of him that saith:

"I will!" Droop lower to my knees!
Sink gently to the leopard's skin!
I must not stoop and take my ease,
Or touch the body lithe and thin.

Bright body of the myriad smiles,
Sweet serpent of the lower life,
The smooth silk touch of thee defiles,
The lures and languors of a wife.

Slip to the floor, I must not turn:
There is a lion in the way!
The star of morning rise and burn:
I seek the dim supernal day!

Sleep there, nor know me gone: sleep there
And never wake, although God's breath
Catch thee at midmost of the prayer
Of sleep—that so dream turns to death.

Pass, be no more! The beckoning dawn
 Woos the white ocean: I must go
Wither my soul's desire is drawn.
 Whither? I know not. Even so.

THE NAMELESS QUEST.

THE king was silent. In the blazoned hall
Shadows, more mute than at a funeral
True mourners, waited, waited in the gloom ;
Waited to hear what child was in the womb
Of his high thoughts. As dead men were we all ;
As dead men wait the trumpet in the tomb.

The king was silent. Tense the high-strung air
Must save itself by trembling—if it dare.
Then a long shudder ran across the space ;
Each man ashamed to see his fellow's face,
Each troubled and confused. He did not spare
Our fear—he spake not yet a little space.

After a while he took the word again :
“Go thou then moonwards on the great salt plain ;
So to a pillar. Adamant, alone,
It stands. Around it see them overthrown,
King, earl, and knight. There lie the questing slain,
A thousand years forgotten—bone by bone.

“No more is spoken—the tradition goes:
‘There learns the seeker what he seeks or knows,’
Thence—none have passed. The desert leagues may
 keep
Some other secret—some profounder deep
Than this one echoed fear: the desert shows
Its ghastly triumph—silence. There they sleep.

“There, brave and pure, there, true and strong, they
 stay
Bleached in the desert, till the solemn day
Of God’s revenge—none knoweth them: they rest
Unburied, unremembered, unconfessed.
What names of strength, of majesty, had they?
What suns are these gone down into the West?

“Even I myself—my youth within me said:
Go, seek this folly; fear not for the dead,
And God is with thine arm. I reached the ridge,
And saw the river and the ghastly bridge
I told you of. Even then, even there, I fled.
Nor knight, nor king—a miserable midge!

“Yet from my shame I dare not turn and run.
My oath grows urgent as my days are done.
Almost mine hour is on me: for its sake
I tell you this, as if my heart should break,
The infinite desire—a burning sun.
The listening fear—the sun-devouring snake!”

The king was silent. None of us would stir.
 I sat, struck dumb, a living sepulchre.
 For—hear me! in my heart this thing became
 My sacrament, my pentecostal flame.
 And with it grew a fear—a fear of Her.
 What Her? Shame had not found itself a name.

Simply I knew it in myself. I brood
 Ten years—so seemed it—O! the bitter food
 In my mouth nauseate! In the silent hall
 One might have heard God's sparrow in its fall.
 But I was lost in mine own solitude—
 I should not hear Mikhael's trumpet-call.

Yet there did grow a clamour shrill and loud:
 One cursed, one crossed himself, another vowed
 His soul against the quest; the tumult ran
 Indecorous in that presence, man to man.
 Stilled suddenly, beholding how I bowed
 My soul in thought: another cry began.

“Gereth the dauntless! Gereth of the Sea!
 Gereth the loyal! Child of royalty!
 Witch-mothered Gereth! Sword above the strong,
 Heart pure, head many-wiled!” The knightly throng
 Clamour my name, and flattering words, to me—
 If they may 'scape the quest—I do them wrong;

They are my friends—Yet something terrible
 Rings in the manly music that they swell.

They are all caught in this immense desire
Deeper than heaven, tameless as the fire.
All catch the fear—the fear of Her—as well,
And dare not—even afraid, I must aspire.

A spirit walking in a dream, I went
To the high throne—they shook the firmament
With foolish cheers. I knelt before the queen
And wept in silence. Then, as it had been
An angel's voice and touch, her face she bent,
Lifted and kissed me—oh! her lips were keen!

Her voice was softer than a virgin's eyes :
“Go! my true knight: for thither, thither lies
The only road for thee; thou hast a prayer
Wafted each hour—my spirit will be there!”
Too late I knew what subtle Paradise
Her dreams and prayers portend: too fresh, too fair!

I turned more wretched than myself knew yet.
I told my nameless pain I should forget
Its shadow as it passed. The king did start,
Gripped my strong hands, and held me to his heart,
And could not speak a moment. Then he set
A curb of sorrow and subdued its dart.

“Go! and the blessing of high God attend
Thy path, and lead thee to the doubtful end.
No tongue that secret ever may reveal.
Thy soul is God-like and thy frame is steel;

Thou mayst win the quest—the king, thy friend,
Gives thee his sword to keep thee—Gereth, kneel!

“I dub thee Earl; arise!” And then there rings
The queen’s voice: “Shall my love not match the
king’s?”

Here, from my finger drawn, this gem of power
Shall guard thee in some unimagined hour.
It hath strange virtue over mortal things.
I freely give it for thy stirrup’s dower.”

I left the presence. Now the buffeting wind
Gladdens my face—I leave the court behind.
Am I Stark mad? My face grows grim and grave;
I see—O Mary Mother, speak and save!
I stare and stare until mine eyes are blind—
There was no jewel in the ring she gave!

Oh! my pure heart! Adulterous love began
So subtly to identify the man
With its own perfumed thoughts. So steals the
grape
Into the furtive brain—a spirit shape
Kisses my spirit as no woman can.
I love her—yes; and I have no escape.

I never spoke, I never looked! But she
Saw through the curtains of the soul of me,
And loved me also! It is very well.
I am well started on the road to Hell.

Loved, and no sin done! Ay, the world shall see
The quest is first—a love less terrible.

Yet, as I ride toward the edge of snow
That cuts the blue, I think. For even so
Comes reason to me: “Oh, return, return!
What folly is it for two souls to burn
With hell’s own fire! What is this quest of woe?
What is the end? Consider and discern!”

Banish the thought! My working reason still
Is the rebellious vassal to my will.
Because I will it. That is God’s own mind.
I cast all thought and prudence to the wind:
On, to the quest! The cursed parrot hill
Mocks on, on, on! The thought is left behind.

Night came upon me thus—a wizard hand
Grasping with silence the reluctant land.
Through night I clomb—behind me grew the light
Reflected in the portal of the night.
I reached the crest at dawn—pallid I stand
Uncomprehending of the sudden sight.

The river and the bridge! The river flows,
Tears of young orphans for its limpid woes.
The red bridge quivers—how my spirit starts,
Its seeming glory built of widows’ hearts!
And yet I could disdain it—heaven knows
I had no dear ones for their counterparts.

Yet the thought chilled me as I touched the reins.
Ah! the poor horse, he will not. So remains,
Divided in his love. With mastered tears
I stride toward the parapet. My ears
Catch his low call; and now a song complains.
The bridge is bleeding and the river hears.

Ah! God! I cannot live for pity deep
Of that heart-quelling chant—I could not sleep
Ever again to think of it. I close
My hearing with my fingers. Gently goes
A quivering foot above them as they weep—
I weep, I also, as the river flows.

Slowly the bridge subsides, and I am flung
Deep in the tears and terrors never sung.
I swim with sorrow bursting at my breast.
Yet I am cleansed, and find some little rest.
Still from my agonised unspeaking tongue
Breaks: I must go, go onward to the quest.

Again the cursed cry: “What quest is this?
Is it worth heaven in thy lover’s kiss?
A queen, a queen, to kiss and never tire!
Thy queen, quick-breathing for your twin desire!”
I shudder, for the mystery of bliss;
I go, heart crying and a soul on fire!

“Resolve all question by a moonward tread.
Follow the moon!” Even so the king had said.

My thought had thanked him for the generous breath
Wherewith he warned us: for delay were death.
And now, too late! no moon is overhead—
Some other meaning in the words he saith?

Or, am I tricked in such a little snare?
I lifted up my eyes. What soul stood there,
Fronting my path? Tall, stately, delicate,
A woman fairer than a pomegranate.
A silver spear her hands of lotus bear,
One shaft of moonlight quivering and straight.

She pointed to the East with flashing eyes:
“Thou canst not see her—but my Queen shall rise.”
Bowed head and beating heart, with feet unsure
I passed her, trembling, for she was too pure.
I could have loved her. No: she was too wise.
Her presence was too gracious to endure.

“She did not bid me go and chain me to her,”
I cried, comparing. Then, my spirit knew her
For One beyond all song—my poor heart turned:
Then, 'tis no wonder. And my passion burned
Mightier yet than ever. To renew her
Venom from those pure eyes? And yet I yearned.

Still, I stepped onward. Credit me so far!
The harlot had my soul: my will, the star!
Thus I went onward, as a man goes blind,
Into a torrent crowd of mine own kind;

Jostlers and hurried folk and mad they are,
A million actions and a single mind.

“What is thy purpose, sweet my lord?” I pressed
One stalwart. “Ah! the quest,” he cried, “the quest.”
God’s heart! the antics, as they toil and shove!
One grabs a coin, one life, another love.
All shriek, “The prize is mine!” as men possessed.
I was not fooled at anything thereof.

Rather I hated them, and scorned for slaves;
“Fools! all your treasure is at last the grave’s!”
Mine eyes had fixed them on the sphinx, the sky.
“Is then this quest of immortality?”
And echo answered from some unseen caves:
Mortality! I shrink, and wonder why.

Strange I am nothing tainted with this fear
Now, that had touched me first. For I am here
Half-way I reckon to the field of salt,
The pillar, and the bones—it was a fault
I am cured of! praise to God! What meets mine ear,
That every nerve and bone of me cries halt?

What is this cold that nips me at the throat?
This shiver in my blood? this icy note
Of awe within my agonising brain?
Neither of shame, nor love, nor fear, nor pain,
Nor anything? Has love no antidote,
Courage no buckler? Hark! it comes again.

Friend, hast thou heard the wailing of the damned?
Friend, hast thou listened when a murderer sham'd
Pale smiles amid his fellows as they spoke
Low of his crime: his fear is like to choke
His palsied throat. How, if Hell's gate were slammed
This very hour upon thy womanfolk?

Conceive, I charge thee! Brace thy spirit up
To drink at that imagination's cup!
Then, shriek, and pass! For thou shalt understand
A little of the pressure of the hand
That crushed me now. Yes, yes! let fancy sup
That grislier banquet than old Atreus planned!

Mind cannot fathom, nor the brain conceive,
Nor soul assimilate, nor heart believe
The horror of that Thing without a Name.
Full on me, boasting, like Death's hand it came,
And struck me headlong. Linger, while I weave
The web of mine old agony and shame.

A little shadow of that hour of mine
Touches thy heart? Fill up the foaming wine,
And listen for a little! How profound
Strikes memory keen-fanged; memory, the hound
That tracks me yet—a shiver takes my spine
At one half-hint, the shadow of that sound.

Where am I? Seven days my spirit fell,
Down, down the whirlpools and the gulfs of hell:

Seven days a corpse lay desolate—at last
Back drew the spirit and the soul aghast
To animate that clay—O horrible!
The resurrection pang is hardly past.

Yet in awhile I stumbled to my feet
To flee—no nightmare could be worse to meet.
And, spite of that, I knew some deadlier trap
Some worm more poisonous would set—mayhap!
I turned—the path? My horror was complete—
A flaming sword across the earthquake gap.

I cried aloud to God in my despair.
“The quest of quests! I seek it, for I dare!
Moonward! on, moonward!” And the full moon shone,
A glory for God’s eyes to dwell upon,
A path of silver furrowed in the air,
A gateway where an angel might have gone.

And forward gleamed a narrow way of earth
Crusted with salt: I watch the fairy birth
Of countless flashes on the crystal flakes,
Forgetting it is only death that makes
Its home the centre of that starry girth.
Yet, what is life? The manhood in me wakes.

The absolute desire hath hold of me.
Death were most welcome in that solemn sea;
So bitter is my life. But carelessness
Of life and death and love is on me—yes!

Only the quest! if any quest there be!
What is my purpose? Could the Godhead guess?

So the long way seemed moving as I went,
Flashing beneath me; and the firmament
Moving with quicker robes that swept the air.
Still Dian drew me to her bosom bare,
And madness more than will was my content.
I moved, and as I moved I was aware!

The plain is covered with a many dead.
Glisten white bone and salt-encrusted head,
Glazed eye imagined, of a crystal built.
And see! dark patches, as of murder spilt.
Ugh! "So thy fellows of the quest are sped!
Thou shall be with them: onward, if thou wilt!"

So was the chilling whisper at my side,
Or in my brain. Then surged the maddening tide
Of my intention. Onward! Let me run!
Thy steed, O Moon! Thy chariot, O Sun!
Lend me fierce feet, winged sandals, wings as wide
As thine, O East wind! And the goal is won!

Was ever such a cruel solitude?
Up rears the pillar. Quaintly shaped and hued,
It focussed all the sky and all the plain
To its own ugliness. I looked again,
And saw its magic in another mood.
A shapeless truth took image in my brain.

A hollow voice from every quarter cries :
‘O thou, zelator of this Paradise,
Tell thou the secret of the pillar! None
Can hear thee, of the souls beneath the sun.
Speak, or the very Godhead in thee dies.
For we are many and thy name is One.

The Godhead in me! As a flash there came
The jealous secret and the guarded name.
The quest was mine! And yet my thoughts confute
My intuition; and my will was mute.
My voice—ah! flashes out the word of flame:
“Eternal Beauty, One and absolute!”

The overwhelming sweetness of a voice
Filled me with Godhead. “Still remains the choice!
Thou knowest me for Beauty! Canst thou bear
The fuller vision, the abundant air?”
I only wept. The elements rejoice;
No tear before had ever fallen there.

I thought within myself a bitter thing,
Standing abased. The golden marriage ring
The queen had given—how her beauty stank
Now in mine yes, where once their passion drank
Its secret sweets of poison. Let the spring
Of love once dawn—all else hath little thank!

Yet resolute I put my love away.
I could not live in this amazing day.

Love is the lotus that is sickly sweet,
That makes men drunken, and betrays their feet :
Beauty, the sacred lotus : let me say
The word, and make my purity complete.

The whole is mine, and shall I keep a part ?
O Beauty, I must see thee as thou art !
Then on my withered gaze that Beauty grew—
Rosy quintessence of alchemic dew !
The Self-informing Beauty ! In my heart
The many were united : and I knew.

Smitten by Beauty down I fell as dead—
So strikes the sunlight on a miner's head.
Blind, stricken, crushed ! That vast effulgence stole,
Flooded the caverns of my secret soul,
And gushed in waves of weeping. I was wed
Unto a part, and could not grasp the whole.

Thus, I was broken on the wheel of Truth.
Fled all the hope and purpose of my youth,
The high desire, the secret joy, the sin
That coiled its rainbow dragon scales within.
Hope's being, life's delight, time's eager tooth ;
All, all are gone ; the serpent sloughs his skin !

The quest is mine ! Here ends mortality
In contemplating the eternal Thee.
Here, She is willing. Stands the Absolute
Reaching its arms toward me. I am mute,

I draw toward. Oh, suddenly I see
The treason-pledge, the royal prostitute.

One moment, and I should have passed beyond
Linked unto Spirit by the fourfold bond.
Not dead to earth, but living as divine,
A priest, a king, an oracle, a shrine,
A saviour! Yet my misty spirit conned
The secret murmur: "Gereh, I am thine!"

I must have listened to the voice of hell.
The earthly horror wove its serpent spell
Against the Beauty of the World: I heard
Desolate voices cry the doleful word
"Unready!" All the soul invisible
Of that vast desert echoed, and concurred.

The voices died in mystery away.
I passed, confounded, lifeless as the clay,
Somewhere I knew not. Many a dismal league
Of various terror wove me its intrigue,
And many a demon daunted: day by day
Death dogged despair, and misery fatigue.

Behold! I came with haggard mien again
Into the hall, and mingled with the train,
A corpse amid the dancers. Then the king
Saw me, and knew me—and he knew the ring!
He did not ask me how I sped: disdain
Curled his old lips: he said one bitter thing.

“You crossed the bridge—no man’s heart trod you there?”

Then crossed his breast in uttering some prayer :
“I pray you follow of your courtesy,
My lord!” I followed very bitterly.
“Likes you the sword I gave?” I did not dare
Answer one word. My soul was hating me.

He bade me draw. I silently obeyed.
My eye shirked his as blade encountered blade.
I was determined he should take my life.
“Went your glance back—encountering my wife?”
“Taunt me!” I cried; “I will not be afraid!”
My whole soul weary of the coward strife.

He seemed to see no opening I gave,
But hated me the more. Serene and suave,
He fenced with deep contempt. I stumble, slip,
Guard wide—and only move his upper lip.
“You know I will not strike, Sir pure and brave!
Fight me your best—or I shall find a whip!”

That stung me, even me. He wronged me, so :
Therefore some shame and hate informed the blow ;
Some coward’s courage pointed me the steel ;
Some strength of Hell : we lunge, and leap, and wheel ;
Hard breath and laboured hands—the flashes grow
Swifter and cruel—this court hath no appeal !

He gladdened then. I would not slip again
And baulk the death of half its shame and pain.

I, his best sword, must fall, in earnest fight.
The old despair was coward—he was right.
Now, king, I pay your debt. A purple stain
Hides his laced throat—I sober at the sight.

“King, you are touched!” “Fight on, Earl Lecherer!”
I cursed him to his face—the added spur
Sticks venom in my lunge—a sudden thrust!
No cry, no gasp; but he is in the dust,
Stark dead. The queen—I hate the name of her!
So grew the mustard-seed, one moment’s lust.

I too was wounded: shameful runs the song.
She nursed me through that melancholy long
Month of despair: she won my life from death.
Ah God! she won that most reluctant breath
Out of corruption: love! ah! love is strong!
What waters quench it? King Shalomah saith.

I am the king: you know it, friend! We wed.
That is the tale of how my wooing sped.
And oh! the quest: half won—incredible?
I am so brave, and pure—folk love me well.
But oh! my life, my being! That is dead,
And my whole soul—a whirlwind out of hell!

“ A RELIGIOUS BRINGING-UP.”

WITH this our “ Christian ” parents marred our youth :

“ One thing is certain of our origin.

We are born Adam’s bastards into sin,
 Servants to Death and Time’s devouring tooth.
 God, damning most, had this one thought of ruth
 To save some dozens—Us : and by the skin
 Of teeth to save us from the devil’s gin—
 Repentance ! Blood ! Prayer ! Sackcloth ! This is
 truth.”

Our parents answer jesting Pilate so.

I am the meanest servant of the Christ :
 But, were I heathen, cannibal, profane,
 My cruel spirit had not sacrificed
 My children to this Moloch. I am plain ?
 “ Blasphemer ! ” “ Damned ! ” ? Undoubtedly—I know !

“THE LAW OF CHANGE.”

SOME lives complain of their own happiness.
In perfect love no sure abiding stands,
In perfect faith are no immortal bands
Of God and man. This passion we possess
Necessitous; insistent none the less
Because we know not how its purpose brands
Our lives. Even on God's knees and in His hands:
The Law of Change. “Out, out, adulteress!”?

These be the furies, and the harpies these?
That discontent should sum the happiest sky?
That of all boons man lacks the greatest—rest?
Nay! But the promise of the centuries,
The certain pledge of immortality,
Child-cry of Man at the eternal Breast.

SYNTHESIS.

WHEN I think of the hundreds of women I have
loved from time to time,
White throats and living bosoms where a kiss might
creep or climb,
Smooth eyes and trembling fingers, faint lips or mur-
derous hair,
All tunes of love's own music, most various and rare ;
When I look back on life, as a mariner on the deep
Sees, tranced, the white wake foaming, fancies the
nereids weep ;
As, on a mountain summit in the thunders and the snow,
I look to the shimmering valley and weep : I loved
you so !
For a moment cease the winds of God upon the reverent
head ;
I lose the life of the mountain, and my soul is with the
dead ;
Yet am I not unaware of the splendour of the height,
Yet am I lapped in the glory of the Sun of Life and
Light :—
Even so my heart looks out from the harbour of God's
breast,
Out from the shining stars where it entered into rest—

Once more it seeks in memory for reverence, not regret,
And it loves you still, my sisters ! as God shall not
forget.

It is ill to blaspheme the silence with a wicked whispered
thought—

How still they were, those nights! when this web of
things was wrought!

How still, how terrible! O my dolorous tender brides,
As I lay and dreamt in the dark by your shameful
beautiful sides!

And now you are mine no more, I know; but I cannot
bear

The curse—that another is drunk on the life that stirs
your hair:

Every hair was alive with a spark of midnight's delicate
flame,

Or a glow of the nether fire, or an old illustrious shame.

Many, so many, were ye to make one Womanhood—

A thing of fire and flesh, of wine and glory and blood,

In whose rose-orient texture a golden light is spun,

A gossamer scheme of love, as water in the sun

Flecked by wonderful bars, most delicately crossed,

Worked into wedded beauties, flickering, never lost—

That is the spirit of love, incarnate in your flesh!

Your bodies had wearied me, but your passion was ever
fresh:

You were many indeed, but your love for me was one.

Then I perceived the stars to reflect a single sun—

Not burning suns themselves, in furious regular race,

But mirrors of midnight, lit to remind us of His face.

Thus I beheld the truth: ye are stars that give me light ;
But I read you aright and learn I am walking in the
night.

Then I turned mine eyes away to the Light that is
above you :

The answering splendid Dawn arose, and I did not
love you.

I saw the breaking light, and the clouds fled far away :

It was the resurrection of the Golden Star of Day.

And now I live in Him ; my heart may trace the years

In drops of virginal blood and springs of virginal tears.

I love you now again with an undivided song.

Because I can never love you, I cannot do you wrong.

I saw in your dying embraces the birth of a new
embrace ;

In the tears of your pitiful faces, another Holier Face.

Unknowing it, undesiring, your lips have led me higher ;

You have taught me purer songs that your souls did
not desire ;

You have led me through your chambers, where the
secret bolt was drawn,

To the chambers of the Highest and the secrets of the
Dawn !

You have brought me to command you, and not to be
denied ;

You have taught me in perfection to be unsatisfied ;

You have taught me midnight vigils, when you smiled
in amorous sleep ;

You have even taught a man the woman's way to weep.

So, even as you helped me, blindly, against your will,

So shall the angel faces watch for your own souls still.
A little pain and pleasure, a little touch of time,
And you shall blindly reach to the subtle and sublime;
You shall gather up your girdles to make ready for the
 way,
And by the Cross of Suffering climb seeing to the Day.
Then we shall meet again in the Presence of the Throne,
Not knowing; yet in Him! O Thou! knowing as we
 are known.

THE HOLY PLACE.

THE NEOPHYTE.

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—
O Light! descend! My feet move vaguely on
In this amazing darkness, in the gloom
That I can touch with trembling sense. There shone
Once, in my misty memory, in the womb
Of some unformulated thought, the flame
And smoke of mighty pillars; yet my mind
Is clouded with the horror of this same
Path of the wise men: for my soul is blind
Yet: and the foemen I have never feared
I could not see (if such should cross the way),
And therefore I am strange: my soul is seared
With desolation of the blinding day
I have come out from: yes, that fearful light
Was not the Sun: my life has been the death,
This death may be the life: my spirit sight
Knows that at last, at least. My doubtful breath
Is breathing in a nobler air; I know,
I know it in my soul, despite of this,
The clinging darkness of the Long Ago,
Cruel as death, and closer than a kiss,

This horror of great darkness. I am come
Into this darkness to attain the light :
To gain my voice I make myself as dumb :
That I may see I close my outer sight :
So, I am Here. My brows are bent in prayer ;
I kneel already in the Gates of Dawn ;
And I am come, albeit unaware,
To the deep sanctuary : my hope is drawn
From wells profounder than the very sea.
Yea, I am come, where least I guessed it so,
Into the very Presence of the Three
That Are beyond all Gods. And now I know
What spiritual Light is drawing me
Up to its stooping splendour. In my soul
I feel the Spring, the all-devouring Dawn,
Rush with my Rising. There, beyond the goal,
The Veil is rent !

Yes : let the veil be drawn.

THE NAME.

SACRED, between the serpent fangs of Pain,
Ringed by the vortex of the hurricane,
Lurks the abyss of fate: the gloomy cave,
Sullen as night, and sleepy as a wave
When tempest lowers and dare not strike, gapes wide,
Vomiting pestilence; the deadly bride
Of death, Despair, grins charnel-wise: the gate
Of Hope clangs resonant: and starless Fate
Glows like a demon brooding over death.
Monstrous and mute, the slow resurgent breath
Spreads forth its poison: the pale child at play
Coughs in his gutter; the hard slave of day
Groans once and dies: the sickly spouse can feel
The cold touch kill the unborn child, and steal
Up to her broken heart: the pale hours hang
Like death upon the aged: the days clang
Like prison portals on the folk of day.
Yet for the children of the night they play
Like fountains in the moonlight: for the few,
The sorrowful, sweet faces of the dew,
The laughter-loving daughters of the dawn,
Whose moving feet make tremble all the lawn

From Hesper to the break of rose and gold,
Where Heaven's petals in the East unfold
The awful flower of morning: for the folk
Bound in one single patient love, a yoke
Too light for fairy fingers to have woven,
Too strong for mere archangels to have cloven
With adamantine blades from the armoury
Of the amazing forges of the sea:
The folk that follow with undaunted mein
The utmost beauty that their eyes have seen—
O patient sufferers! yet your storm-scarred brows
Burn with the star of majesty: your vows
Have given you the wisdom and the power
To weld eternities within one hour,
To bind and braid the North wind's serpent hair,
And track the East wind to his mighty lair
Even in the caverns of the womb of dawn;
To take the South wind and his fire withdrawn
And clothe him with your kiss; to seize the West
In his gold palace where the sea-winds rest,
And hurl him ravening on the breaking foam;
To find the Spirit in his glimmering home
And draw his secret from unwilling lips;
To master earthquake, and the dread eclipse;
To dominate the red volcanic rage;
To quench the whirlpool, conquering war to wage
Against all gods not wholly made as ye,
O patient, and O marvellous! I see,
I see before me an archangel stand,
Whose flaming scimitar, a triple brand,

Quivers before him, whose vast eyebrows bend,
A million comets : for his locks extend
A million flashing terrors : on his breast
He bears a mightier cuirass : for his vest
All heaven blazes : for his brows a crown
Roars into the abyss : his mighty frown
Quells many an universe and many an age—
Yea, many eternities ! His nostrils rage
With fire and fury, and his feet are shod
With all the splendours of the avenging God.
I see him and I tremble ! But my hand
Still flings its gesture of supreme command
Upwards ; my voice still dares to tongue the word
That hell and chaos and destruction heard
And ruined, shrieking ! yea, my strong voice rolls,
That martyr-cry of many slaughtered souls,
Utterly potent both to bless and ban—
I, I command thee in the name of Man !
He trembled then. And far in thunder rolled
Through countless ages, through the infinite gold
Beyond existence, grew that master-sound
Into the rent and agonized profound,
Till even the Highest heard me : and He said,
As one who speaks alone among men dead :
“ Behold, he rules as I the abyss of flame.
For lo ! he knoweth, and hath said, My Name ! ”

CERBERUS.

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.

THE EVOCATION.

FROM the abyss, the horrible lone world
Of agony, more sharp than moonbeams strike
The shaken glacier, my bitter cry is hurled,
As the avenger lightning. Swiftly whirled,
It flings in circles closing serpent-like
On the abominable devil-horde
I summon to the mastery of the sword.

In my white palace, where the flashing dawn
Leaps from the girdling bastions, where the light
Flames from the talisman as if a fawn
Glode through the thickets, where the soul, withdrawn
From every element, gleams through the night
Into that darkness palpable, where They
Lurk from the torment of the light of day.

Swings the swift sword in paths of vivid blue ;
Rings the sharp summons in the halls of fear ;
Flames the great lamen ; as a fiery dew
Falls the keen chanted music ; fierce and true
Beams the bright diamond of the crowning sphere.
None may withstand the summons : like dead flame
Flares darkness deeper, and demands its name.

Mine eyes peer deeper in the quivering gloom—

What horrors crowd upon the aching sight!
Behold! the phantom! Icy as the tomb,
His head of writhing scorpions in the womb
Of deadlier terrors: how a charnel-light
Gleams on his beetle frame! What poison drips
Of slime and blood from his disastrous lips!

What oceans of decaying water steam

For his vast essence! And a voice rolls forth
With miserable fury from that stream
Of horror: “Thou hast called me by the beam
Of glory, by the devastating wrath
Of thine accurséd godhead: tell me then
My Name! Thou hardiest of the Sons of Men!”

“Thy name is—stay! thou liest! I discern

In Thee no terror that my spells evoke.
Begone, thou wandering corpse of night! return
Into thy shadowy world! My symbols burn
Against thee, shade of terror! Go!” It spoke:
“Yea! I am human. Know my actual truth:
I am that ghost, the father of thy youth!”

“Poor wandering phantom!”—the exultant yell

And wolfish howling of all damnéd souls
Peals from the ravening jaws and gulfs of hell:
Leaps that foul horror through the terrible
Extinguished circle of the burning bowls.
Then I remember, fling the gleaming rod
Against him: “Liar, back! For I am God!”

Back flung the baffled corpse. But through the air
 Looms the more startling vision in the night;
 The actual demon of my work is there!
 Where is the glittering circle? Where, ah, where
 The radiant bowls whose flame rose fiery bright?
 I am alone in the absolute abyss;
 No aid; no helper; no defence—but this!

My left hand seeks the lamén. Once again
 Fearless I front the awful shape before me,
 Fearless I speak his Name. My trembling brain
 Vibrates that Word of Power. I cry amain:
 “Down, Dweller of the Darkness, and adore me!
 I am thy Master, and thy God! Behold
 The Rose of Ruby and the Cross of Gold!

“I am thy Saviour!” At the kindling word
 Up springs the dawn-light in the broken bowls;
 Up leaps the glittering circle. Then I heard
 A hoarse shrill voice, as if some carrion bird
 Shrieked, mightier than the storm that rocks and
 rolls
 Through desolation: “Thou hast known my Name.
 What is thy purpose, Master of the Flame?”

I made demand: through long appalling hours
 Stayed he to tempt and try my adamant
 Purpose: at last the legionary powers
 Behind him sank affrayed; his visage lowers
 Less menacing: his head is turned aslant

In vain: I bid him kneel and swear: the earth
Rocked with the terror of that deadlier birth.

He swore: he vanished: the wide sky resounds
With echoing thunders: through the blinding night
The stars resume their courses: at the bounds
Of the four watch-towers cry the waking hounds:
“The night is well”: slow steals the ambient light
Through all the borders of the universe
At that last lifting of my strenuous curse.

Slow steals the ambient light: white peace resumes
In planet, element, and sign, her sway.
The twisted ether shapes itself: relumes
The benediction all the faded fumes
With holier incense: in the fervid way
All nature rests: with holy calm I blend
Blessing and prayer at the appointed end.

“ THE ROSE AND THE CROSS.”

OUT of the seething cauldron of my woes,
Where sweets and salt and bitterness I flung;
Where charmed music gathered from my tongue,
And where I chained strange archipelagoes
Of fallen stars; where fiery passion flows
A curious bitumen; where among
The glowing medley moved the tune unsung
Of perfect love: thence grew the Mystic Rose.

Its myriad petals of divided light;
Its leaves of the most radiant emerald;
Its heart of fire like rubies. At the sight
I lifted up my heart to God and called:
How shall I pluck this dream of my desire?
And lo! there shaped itself the Cross of Fire!

HAPPINESS.

IT is the seasonable sun of spring
That gilds the all-rejuvenescent air—
New buds, young birds, so happy in the rare
Fresh life of earth: myself am bound to sing,
Feeling the resurrection crown me king.
I am so happy as men never were.
Of sorrow much, of suffering a share,
Leave me unmoved, or leave me conquering.

O miserable! that it should be so!
Lord Jesus, Sufferer for the sins of man,
Thou didst invite me to Thy shame and loss.
And I am happy! Pity me! Bestow
The right to work in the eternal Plan,
The right to hang on the eternal Cross!

THE HOLY OF HOLIES.

THE PALACE OF THE WORLD.

THE fragrant gateways of the dawn
Teem with the scent of flowers.
The mother, Midnight, has withdrawn
Her slumberous kissing hours :
Day springs, with footsteps as a fawn,
Into her rosy bowers.

The pale and holy maiden horn
In highest heaven is set.
My forehead, bathed in her forlorn
Light, with her lips is met ;
My lips, that murmur in the morn,
With lustrous dew are wet.

My prayer is mighty with my will ;
My purpose as a sword
Flames through the adamant, to fill
The gardens of the Lord
With music, that the air be still,
Dumb to its mighty chord.

I stand above the tides of time
And elemental strife ;

My figure stands above, sublime,
 Shadowing the Key of Life,
And the passion of my mighty rhyme
 Divides me as a knife.

For secret symbols on my brow,
 And secret thoughts within,
Compel eternity to Now,
 Draw the Infinite within.
Light is extended. I and Thou
 Are as they had not been.

So on my head the light is one,
 Unity manifest ;
A star more splendid than the sun
 Burns for my crownéd crest ;
Burns, as the murmuring orison
 Of waters in the west.

What angel from the silver gate
 Flames to my fierier face ?
What angel, as I contemplate
 The unsubstantial space ?
Move with my lips the laws of Fate
 That bind earth's carapace ?

No angel, but the very light
 And fire and spirit of Her,
Unmitigated, eremite,
 The unmanifested myrrh,

Ocean, and night that is not night,
The mother-mediator.

O sacred spirit of the Gods!
O triple tongue! Descend,
Lapping the answering flame than nods,
Kissing the brows that bend,
Uniting all earth's periods
To one exalted end.

Still on the mystic Tree of Life
My soul is crucified;
Still strikes the sacrificial knife
Where lurks some serpent-eyed
Fear, passion, or man's deadly wife
Desire, the suicide!

Before me dwells the Holy One
Anointed Beauty's King;
Behind me, mightier than the Sun,
To whom the cherubs sing,
A strong archangel, known of none,
Comes crowned and conquering.

An angel stands on my right hand
With strength of ocean's wrath;
Upon my left the fiery brand,
Charioted fire smites forth:
Four great archangels to withstand
The furies of the path.

Flames on my front the fiery star
About me and around.
Pillared, the sacred sun, afar,
Six symphonies of sound ;
Flames, as the Gods themselves that are ;
Flames, in the abyss profound.

The spread arms drop like thunder ! So
Rings out the lordlier cry,
Vibrating through the streams that flow
In ether to the sky,
The moving archipelago,
Stars in their seigneurie.

Thine be the kingdom ! Thine the power !
The glory triply thine !
Thine, through Eternity's swift hour,
Eternity, thy shrine—
Yea, by the holy lotus-flower,
Even mine !

THE MOUNTAIN CHRIST.

O WORLD of moonlight! Visionary vale
Of ocean-sleeping mountains! Mighty chasm
Within whose wild abyss there chants the pale,
The dolorous phantasm
Of wrecked white womanhood! The wizard cold
Grips the mute valley in his grasp of gold!

Yonder the hatred of the dismal steep
Sweeps up to wrathful thunders, that are curled
In billowy menace, as the deadlier deep
That menaces the world
With breaking foam: so hangs the glacier, rent
By giant sunrays, in the frost-grip pent.

Yonder again rears up the craggy wall
Its cleaving head to heaven: thither I
Clomb the vast terrors, where the echoing fall
Roars stony from the sky.
Thither I pressed at midnight, and the dawn
Saw my swift feet move faster than the fawn.

Pale seas of blue soft azure lie beyond,
Far o'er the gleaming green: the smoke is risen

Out of the cloudy north; the incense-wand
That binds dead souls in prison,
That prison of the day, when sleepless dead
Rest for awhile from agony and dread.

Strange! how a certain fear possesses me
Alone amid their crag-bound solitude.
Even beyond the keen delight—to Be—
Steals that diviner mood
Of wonder at the miracle—the plan
Of Nature crowned by the astounding Man!

The secret of the Lord is set with him
That wonders at His Majesty: his praise
Wells from no trembler's misery: his hymn
Swells the exultant day's.
His psalm wings upward, and reflected down
Even in Hell makes music and renown.

Yea! for the echo of the anthem rolls
Down to the lost unfathomable deep.
Down, to the darkness of all shades and souls,
The founts of music sweep.
Even the devils in the utter night
Feel it the saving, not the avenging light.

Yea! for the worship of my secret song
Vibrates through every chasm of the world:
Its sound is caught by angels, and made strong:
By sylphs, and dewed, and pearled

With fairer melodies, and borne, alone,
Aloft, to the immeasurable throne.

O mighty palace of immortal stone!
O glamour of the fathomless gray snow!
O clouds! O whirlwinds of my mountain throne!
I charge your souls to go
Unto the souls of men, and bid them rise
Toward redemption, and the unsullied eyes.

I charge you go and whisper unto men
The solemn glories of your secret mind,
Making them pure, and wise; return ye then
Unto your proper kind,
Having thus offered water, blood, and tears,
For the remission of our carrion years.

So deepen all the mountains: even so
The wandering shadows close upon the day;
The sunlight burns its fading ruby glow
On the chaotic way.
Night falls, and I must tread the dizzy steep
Again, to plunge to the devouring deep.

The blessing of the Highest shall be set
On your white heads, O monarchs of the snow!
The blessing of the Highest, lightening yet
The burdens that ye know.
So, as three golden arrows of the sun
Strike, may the threefold sacrament be One!

O visionary valley of my Soul!

When shall thy beauty, even thine, be made
As pure and mighty as these hills that roll

In mist and sun and shade?

O thou! the Highest! make my will as thine,
My consciousness, the consciousness divine!

TO ALLAN MACGREGOR.

O MAN of Sorrows: brother unto Grief!
O pale with suffering, and dumb hours of
pain!

O worn with Thought! thy Godhead springs again
The Soul of Resurrection: thou art chief
And lord of all thy Soul: O patient thief
Of God's own fire! What mysteries find fane
In the white shrine of thy white spirit's reign,
Thou man of Sorrows: O, beyond belief!

Let God's own Peace be with thee: let thy days
Prosper in spite of thine unselfish soul;
And as thou lovest, so let Love increase
Upon thee and about thee: till thy ways
Gleam with the splendour of that secret goal
Whose long war grows the great abiding peace.

THE ROSICRUCIAN.

À SA MAJESTÉ JACQUES IV D'ÉCOSSE.

I SEE the centuries wax and wane.
 I know their mystery of pain,
 The secrets of the living fire,
 The key of life : I live : I reign :
 For I am master of desire.

Silent, I pass amid the folk
 Caught in its mesh, slaves to its yoke.
 Silent, unknown, I work and will
 Redemption, godhead's master-stroke,
 And breaking of the wands of ill.

No man hath seen beneath my brows
 Eternity's exultant house.
 No man hath noted in my brain
 The knowledge of my mystic spouse.
 I watch the centuries wax and wane.

Poor, in the kingdom of strong gold,
 My power is swift and uncontrolled.
 Simple, amid the maze of lies ;
 A child, among the cruel old,
 I plot their stealthy destinies.

So patient, in the breathless strife ;
So silent, under scourge and knife ;
 So tranquil, in the surge of things ;
I bring them from the well of Life,
 Love, from celestial water-springs !

From the shrill fountain-head of God
I draw out water with the rod
 Made luminous with light of power.
I seal each æon's period,
 And wait the moment and the hour.

Aloof, alone, unloved, I stand
With love and worship in my hand.
 I commune with the Gods : I wait
Their summons, and I fire the brand.
 I speak their Word : and there is Fate.

I know no happiness, no pain,
No swift emotion, no disdain,
 No pity : but the boundless light
Of the Eternal Love, unslain,
 Flows through me to redeem the night.

Mine is a sad-slow life : but I,
I would not gain release, and die
 A moment ere my task be done.
To falter now were treachery—
 I should not dare to greet the sun !

Yet, in one hour I dare not hope,
The mighty gate of Life may ope,
 And call me upwards to unite
(Even my soul within the scope)
 With That Unutterable Light.

Steady of purpose, girt with Truth,
I pass, in my eternal youth,
 And watch the centuries wax and wane :
Untouched by Time's corroding tooth,
 Silent, immortal, unprofane !

My empire changes not with time.
Men's kingdom's cadent as a rhyme
 Move me as waves that rise and fall.
They are the parts, that crash or climb,
 I only comprehend the All.

I sit, as God must sit ; I reign.
Redemption from the threads of pain
 I weave, until the veil be drawn.
I burn the chaff, I glean the grain ;
 In silence I await the dawn.

THE ATHANOR.

LIBERTINE touches of small fingers creep
Among my curls to-night: pale ghastly kisses,
Like mournful ghosts roused from their ruined sleep
By clamorous cries of murder. Strange abysses
Loom in the vista keen eyes penetrate,
Vague forecasts of immeasurable fate.

O thou belovéd blood, that wells and weeps!
O thou belovéd mouth, that beats and bleeds!
O mystic bosom where some serpent sleeps,
Sweet mockery of a thousand saintlier creeds!
Even I, that breathe your perfume, taste your breath,
Know, even this hour, ye are not life, but death!

No death ye bring more godlike than desire,
When seas roar tempest-lashed, and foam is flung
Raging on pitiless crags, and gloomy fire
Lurks in the master-cloud; corpses are swung
Helpless and horrible in trough and crest—
That death were music, and the lord of rest.

No death ye bring as when the storm is rolled,
An imminent giant on the sun-ripped snows,

Where icy fingers grip the overbold

Son of their secrets, and like springes close
On his choked throat and frozen body—Nay!
That death were twilight, and the gate of Day!

No death ye bring as his, that grips the flag

In desperate fingers, and with bloody sword
Flames up the thundering breach, while bastioned crag,
Glacis, and pent-house belch their monstrous horde
Of hideous engines shattering—this strife
Clears the straight road of Glory and of Life!

Nay: but the hateful death that stings the soul

Into rebellion; the insensate death
That chokes its own delight with words that roll
Mightier-mouthed than the archangel's breath;
The death that murders courage ere it drink
The soul's own life-blood on the desperate brink!

So, from the languid fingers in my curls

And dreamy worship of a woman's eyes,
I look beyond the miserable whirls
Of foolish measures woven in the skies;
Beyond the thoughtless stars: beyond God's sleep:
Beyond the deep: beneath the deadly deep!

Infinite rings of luminous ether move

At first amid the blackness that I seek:
Infinite motion and amazing love
Deaden the lustre of the night. I speak

The cry of silence, that is heard unspoken ;
That, being heard, rings evermore unbroken.

Silence, deep silence. Not a shudder stirs
The vast demesne of unforgetful space :
No comet's lunatic rush, no meteor whirs,
No star dares breathe, no planet knows his place
In that supreme unquiet quietude.
I am the master of my own deep mood.

I am the master. Yea, no doubt I rule
The whole mad universe by will extended—
Who whispers then, "O miserable fool!
This night thy might and majesty are ended ;
Thy soul shall be required of thee" ? I heard
This voice, and knew it for my proper word !

Yes, mine own voice : the higher spirit speaks,
Stemming the hands that guide, the arms that hold,
Even the infinite brain : that spirit seeks
A loftier dawn of more ephemeral gold—
Ephemeral, and eternal : droop thine head,
O God ! for thou must suffer this : I said !

Droop thy wide pinions, O thou mortal God !
Sink thy vast forehead, and let Life consume
The miserable life thy feet have trod
Beneath them, that thine own life in its doom
Fall, in its resurrection to arise ;
Stoop, that its holier hope may cleave the skies.

Power, power, and power! O single sacrifice
On thine own altar: let thy savour steam
Up, through the domes of broken Paradise;
Up, by Euphrates' unimagined stream;
Up, by strange river and mysterious lawn
To some impossible diadem of dawn!

So the mere orderly ruling of events
Shall change and blossom to a finer flower
Until it serve to worlds and elements
For aspiration in the nobler hour—
Not mere repression, but the hope and crown
Of fallen hierarchies no more cast down.

O misery of triple love and grief
And hope! O joy of hatred and despair
And happiness! The little hour is brief,
And the lithe fingers soothe the listless hair
Less, and the kisses swoon to tenderer sighs
And little sobs of sleeping ecstasies.

No! for the envy of the infinite
Crushes the juice from out the poppy's stem,
And brown-stained fingers wring the petals white,
And weary lips seek lotus-life in them
Vainly: the lotus burns above the tomb—
Yea, but in thought's unfathomable womb!

For spiritual life and love and light
Climb the swayed ladder of our various fate

The steep rude stair that mocks the hero's might,
Casts off the wise, and crumbles with the great.
Yet from the highest crown no blossom fell,
Save one, to bring salvation unto Hell.

O angel of my spiritual desire!
O luminous master of the silver feet!
O passionate rose of infinite white fire!
O cross of sacrifice made bitter-sweet!
O wide-wing, star-brow, veritable lord!
O mystic bearer of the flaming sword!

O brows half seen, O visionary star
Seen in the fragrant breezes of the East!
O lover of my love, O avatar
Of the All-One, O mystical High Priest!
O thou before whose eyes my weak eyes fail,
Wonderful warden of the Holy Grail!

O thou, mine angel, whom these eyes have seen,
These hands have handled, and this mouth has
kissed!
O thou, the very tongue of fire, the clean
Sweet-scented presence of a holier Christ!
Listen, and answer, and behold! My wings
Droop, O thou stronger than the immortal kings!

My flame burns dim! O bring the broken jar
And alabaster casket, and dispense

The oil that flows from that supernal star,
And holy fountains of the Influence.
Bring peace, and strength, and quicken in my heart
Mastery of night-fear and the day-flung dart.

Yea! from the limit of the fallen day,
And barren ocean of ungathered Time,
Bring Night, and bring Eternity, and stay
With white wings pointing where tired feet may
climb:
Even the pathway where shed blood ran deep
To build red roses in the land of Sleep.

O guardian of the pallid hours of night!
O tireless watcher of the smitten noon!
O sworded with the majesty of light,
O girded with the glory of the moon!
Angel of absolute splendour! Link of mine
Old weary spirit with the All-Divine!

Ship that shalt carry me by many winds
Driven on the limitless ocean! Mighty sword,
By which I force that barrier of the mind's
Miscomprehension of its own true lord!
Listen, and answer, and behold my brow
Fiery with hope! Bend down, and touch it now!

Press the twin dawn of thy desirous lips
In the swart masses of my hair; bend close,

And shroud all earth in masterless eclipse,
While my heart's murmur through thy being flows,
To carry up the prayer, as incense teems
Skyward, to those immeasurable streams!

Breathe the creative Sign upon my mouth
That even the body may become the soul:
Cry, as the chained Eagle of the South,
"A house of death," and make my spirit whole!
Touch with pure balm the five mysterious wounds!
Come! come away! but not your mighty sounds!

O wind of all the world! O silent river!
O sea of seas! O flower of all the flowers!
O fire! O spirit! Beam thou on for ever
Through æons of illimitable hours!
Kiss thou my forehead, let thy tender breath
Woo me to life, and my desire to death!

I shall be ready for it by-and-by,
That sharp initiation, when the whole
Body is torn with sundering pangs, and I,
The very conscious essence of the soul,
Am rent with agony, as when the pale
Christ heard the shriek of the dividing veil.

That awful mystery, its heart torn out,
Palpitates on the altar-stone of life:
That broken self, that hears the triumph-shout
Of its own voice beneath the falling knife,

When, like a bad dream changing, swiftly grows
A new soul's joy, a fuller-pettalled rose.

Many the spirits broken for one man ;
Many the men that perish to create
One God the more ; many the weary and wan
Old Gods that die to constitute a Fate :
How many Fates then, think you, must control
The stainless aspiration of the soul ?

Not one. I tell you, destiny is sure,
Yet moves no finger : though it tune my tongue,
My tongue shall tune it too : my words endure
As destiny decays : my hands are flung
In prayer to Heaven ; nay, to mine own crown,
To raise myself, and not to drag it down !

O holiest Lord of the divine white flame
Of brilliance sworded in the temple sky !
O thou who knowest my most secret name,
Who whisperest when only thou and I
Make up our universe : bestow thy kiss :
Arise ! Come, let us pierce the old abyss !

Rise ! Move ! Appear ! Let us go forth together,
Into the solemn passionless profound,
Into the darkness, and the thrilling weather,
Into the silence louder than all sound,
Into the vast implacable inane !
Come, let us journey thither once again !

THE CHANT TO BE SAID OR SUNG
UNTO OUR LADY ISIS.

ROLL through the caverns of matter, the world's
irremovable bounds!

Roll, ye wild billows of ether! the Sistrion is shaken
and sounds!

Wild and sonorous the clamour, vast in the region of
death,

Live with the Fire of the Spirit, the essence and flame
of the breath!

Sound, O sound!

Gleam in the world of the dark, where the chained ones
shall tremble and flee!

Gleam in the skies of the dusk, for the Light of the
Dawn is in me!

Light on the forehead, and life in the nostrils, and love
in the breast,

Shine, O thou Star of the Dawning, thou Sun of the
Radiant Crest!

Shine, O shine!

Flame through the sky in the strength of the chariot-
wheels of the Sun!

Flame, ye young fingers of light, on the West of the
Dawning that run!

Flame, O thou Meteor Car, for my fire is exalted in
thee!

Lighten the darkness and herald the daylight, and
waken the sea!

Flame, O flame!

Crown Her, O crown Her with stars as with flowers for
a virginal gaud!

Crown Her, O crown Her with Light and the flame of
the down-rushing Sword!

Crown Her, O crown Her with Love for maiden and
mother and wife!

Hail unto Isis! Hail! For She is the Lady of Life!
Isis crowned!

A LITANY.

THE ghosts of abject days flit by ;
 The bloated goblins of the past ;
 Dim ghouls in soulless apathy ;
 Fates imminent, and dooms aghast !
 O Mother Mout, O Mother Night,
 Give me the Sun of Life and Light !

The shadows of my hopes devoured,
 The crown of my intent cast down,
 The hate that shone, the love that lowered,
 Make up God's universal frown.
 O Lord, O Hormakhou, display
 The rosy earnest of the day !

The mighty pomp of desolate
 Dead kings, a pageant, moves along ;
 Dead queens unite in desperate,
 Unsatisfied, unholy song.
 O Khephra, manifest in flesh,
 Arise, create the world afresh !

The silence of my heart is one
 With memory's insatiate night ;

I hardly dare to hope the sun.

I seek the darkness, not the light.
O Lord Harpocrates, be still
The moveless centre of my will!

My sorrows are more manifold
Than His that bore the sins of man.
My sins are like the starry fold,
My hopes their desolation wan.
O Nuit, the starry one arise,
And set thy starlight in my skies!

In darkness, in the void abyss,
I grope with vain despairing arms.
The silence as a serpent is,
The rustle of the world alarms.
O Horus, Light in Darkness, bless
My failure with thine own success!

My suffering is keen as theirs
That in Amenti taste of death;
Not mine own pains create these prayers:
For them I claim the living Breath.
O Lord Osiris, bend and bring
All winters to thy sign of Spring!

Poor folly mine: I cannot see
Save from one corner of one star!
So many millions over me;
So many, and the next, how far!

O Wisdom-crowned Ta-hu-ti, lend
Thy magic: let my light extend!

I cannot comprehend one truth.
My sight is biased, and my mind—
One snake-skin thought is of its youth;
Grows old, and casts the slough behind.
O Themis, Lady of the plume,
Shed thy twin godhead in the gloom!

How ugly is this life of mine!
How slimes it in the terrene mud!
Clouds hide the beauty all-divine,
The moonlight has a mist of blood.
O Hathoor, Lady of the West,
Take thy sad lover to thy breast!

Even the perfumes of the dawn
Intoxicate, deceive the soul.
Let every shadow be withdrawn!
Let there be Light, supreme and whole!
O Ra, thou golden Lord of Day,
The Sun of Righteousness display!

The burden is so hard to bear.
I took too adamant a cross;
This sackcloth rends my soul to wear;
My self-denial is as dross!
O Shu, that holdest up the sky,
Hold thou thy servant, lest he die!

Nature is one with my distress.

The flowers are dull, the stars are pale.
I am the Soul of Nothingness.

I cannot lift the golden veil.
O Mother Isis, let thine eyes
Behold my grief, and sympathise!

I cannot round the perfect wheel,
Attain not to the fuller end.
In part I love, in part I feel,
Know, worship, will, and comprehend.
O Mother Nephthys, fill me up
Thine own perfection's deadly cup!

My aspiration quails within me ;
"My heart is fixed," in vain I cry ;
The little loves and whispers win me :
"Eli, lama sabacthani!"
O Chomse, moon-god, grant thy boon,
The silver pathway of the moon!

Beyond the Glory of the Dawn,
Beyond the Splendour of the Sun,
Thy secret Spirit is withdrawn,
The plumes of the Concealéd One.
Amoun! upon the Cross I cry,
I am Osiris, even I!

O Thou! the All, the many-named,
The One in many manifest!

Let not my spirit be ashamed,
But win to its eternal rest!
Thou Self from Nothing! bring Thou me
Unto that Self which is in Thee!

AMEN.

THE EPILOGUE IS
SILENCE.

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