

IN THE HOUR BEFORE REVOLT.

“ . . . the green paradise which western waves  
Embosom in their ever-wailing sweep,  
Talking of freedom to their tongueless caves,  
Or to the spirits which within them keep  
A record of the wrongs which, though they sleep,  
Die not, but dream of retribution.”

*Adonais [cancelled passage].*

WILD pennons of sunrise the splendid,  
And scarlet of clustering flowers  
Cry aloud that the Winter is ended,  
Claim pace for the re-risen hours.  
The Ram in the Heavens exalted  
Calls War to uncover her wing ;  
Through skies that be hollow and vaulted  
Exulting the shouts of him ring :  
The Sign of the Spring.

How hollows the heart of the heaven !  
How light swells his voice for a cry !  
The winter is shaken and riven,  
And death and the fruits of him die.  
The billow roars back to its tyrant,  
The wind ; the red thunderbolts roar ;  
The flame and the earthquake aspirant  
Leap forth as an herald before  
The trumpet of war.

In crimson he robes him for raiment,  
In armour all rusted and red :  
Spear shakes and sword flashes, exclaimant  
To share in the spoil of the dead.

A helmet flames forth on his forehead,  
Gold sparks from the forge of the stars,  
His shield with the Gorgon made horrid  
Hath blood on its bull-battled bars—  
Thou God of me, Mars!

He strides through the vibrating æther;  
Spurns earth from His warrior feet;  
Shakes fire from the forges beneath her;  
His glances are fervid and fleet.  
With a cry that makes tremble the thunder,  
Light-speared, with a sword that is flame,  
He bursts the vast spaces asunder.  
His angels arise and proclaim:  
The Lord is His Name!

O Lord! Thou didst march out of Edom!  
Thou leapedst from the Mountains of Seir!  
The breath of Thy voice was as Freedom!  
The nations did tremble with fear.  
The heathen, their fury forsook them;  
The Moabites trembled and fled.  
O Lord, when Thy countenance shook them.  
Thy voice in the House of the Dead.  
O Lord! Thou has said!

The lightnings were kindled and lightened,  
Thy thunder was heard on the deep;  
The stars with Thy Fear shook and whitened,  
The sun and the moon in the steep.  
The sea rose in tumult and clamour,  
The Earth also shook with Thee then,  
As Thor had uplifted his hammer,  
And smitten the mutinous men.  
O! rise Thou again!

The voice of the Lord is uplifted;  
The wilderness also obeys;  
The flames of the fire they are rifted;

The waves of the sea know His ways.  
The cedars of Lebanon hear Thee,  
The desert of Kadesh hath known ;  
The Sons of Men know Thee and fear Thee,  
Flee far from the Light of Thy Throne.  
For Thou art alone.

O Lord! Is Thy path in the Water,  
The marvellous ways of the Deep?  
Not there, O not there! Wilt Thou slaughter  
Oblivion's sons in their sleep?  
Hath the deep disobeyed Thee or risen  
In wrath and revolt to Thy sky,  
Broken loose from the bands of her prison?  
Held counsel against the Most High?  
Yea, even as I!

But I, O most Mighty, invoke Thee,  
Whose footsteps are in the Unknown.  
My cries were the cries that awoke Thee,  
Upstarting in arms from Thy Throne!  
I call Thee, I pray Thee, I chide Thee,  
Whose glory my foes have abhorred.  
My spirit is fixed, may abide Thee,  
Awake the Invisible Sword.  
For Thou art the Lord!

Look down upon earth and behold us  
Few folk who have sworn to be free.  
Past days, when the traitors had sold us,  
We trample; we call upon Thee!  
Look Thou on the armed ones, the furious,  
The Saxons! they brandish the steel;  
Heaven rings with their insults injurious;  
Earth moans for their harrow and wheel.  
To Thee we appeal.

They boast, though their triumph Hell's gift is,  
On Africa's desperate sons:

“Our thousands have conquered their fifties ;  
Our twenties have murdered their ones.”  
That glory—that shame—let them trumpet  
To Europe’s unquickenng ear.  
List Thou to the boast of the strumpet !  
Lend Thou, Thou indignant, an ear !  
Then—shall they not fear ?

O Lord, to Thy strength in the thunder,  
Thy chariot-wheels in the war,  
We, Ireland, look upward and wonder,  
The Sword of Thee smiting before.  
In the hour of Revolt that burns nigher  
Each hour as it leaps to the sky,  
We look to Thee, Lord for Thy Fire ;  
We look—shall Thy Justice deny ?  
Well, can we not die ?

But Thou, Thou shalt fall from the heaven  
As hail on the furious host.  
I see them : their legions are driven ;  
Their cohorts are broken and lost.  
Thy fire hath dispersed them and shattered !  
Thy hesitate, waver, and flee !  
Thy tyrant is shaken and scattered,  
And Ireland is clear to the Sea !  
Green Erin is free !

Hail ! Hail to Thee, Lord of us, Horus !  
All hail to the warrior name !  
Thy chariots shall drive them before us,  
Thy sword sweep them forth as a flame.  
Rise ! Move ! and descend ! I behold Thee,  
Heaven cloven of fieriest bars,  
Armed Light ; and they follow and fold Thee,  
Thine armies of terrible stars.  
The Powers of Mars !

At the brightness that leapeth before Thee,  
The heavens bow down at Thine ire ;  
Thick clouds pass to death and adore Thee,  
Wild hailstones and flashings of fire.  
The mountains of Ages are shattered ;  
Perpetual hills are bowed down ;  
The Winds of the Heaven are scattered,  
Borne back from Thy furious frown,  
O Lord of Renown !

In terror and tumult and battle  
Thy breath smiteth forth as a sword ;  
The Saxons are driven as cattle ;  
We know Thee, that Thou art the Lord !  
Forth Freedom flings skyward, a maiden  
Rejoicing, upsprung from the sea,  
And the wild lyre of Erin is laden  
At last with the songs of the free !  
Hail! Hail unto Thee !