

IN THE GREAT PYRAMID OF GHIZEH.

I SAW in a trance or a vision the web of the ages unfurled, flung wide with a scream of derision, a mockery mute of the world. As it spread over sky I mapped it fair on a sheet of blue air with a hurricane pen. I copy it here for men. First on the ghostly adytum of pale mist that was the abyss of time and space (the stars all blotted out, poor faded nenuphars on the storm-sea of the infinite :) I wist a shapeless figure arise and cover all, its cloak an ancient pall, vaster and older than the skies of night, and blacker than all broken years—aye! but it grew and held me in its grasp so that I felt its flesh, not clean sweet flesh of man but leprous white, and crawling with innumerable tears like worms, and pains like a sword-severed asp, twitching, and loathlier than all mesh of hates and lusts, defiling; nor any voice it had, nor any motion, it was infinite in its own world of horror, irredeemably bad as everywhere sunlit, being this world, forget not! being this world, this universe, the sum of all existence; so that opposing fierce resistance to the all-law, stood loves and joys, delicate girls, and beautiful strong boys, and bearded men like gods, and golden things, and bright desires with wings, all beauties, and all truths of life poets have ever prized. So showed the microscope, this aged strife between all forms; but seen afar, seen well drawn in a focus, synthesised, the whole was sorrow and despair; agony biting through the fair; meanness, contemptibility, enthroned; all proposeless, all unatoned; all putrid of an hope, all vacant of a soul. I called upon its master, as who should call

on God. Instead, arose a shining form, sweet as a whisper of soft air kissing the brows of a great storm; his face with light was molten, musical with waves of his delight moving across: his countenance utterly fair! then was my philosophic vision shamed: conjecture at a loss; and my whole mind revolted; then I blamed the vision as a lie; yet bid that vision speak how he was named, being so wonderfully desirable. Whereat he smiled upon me merrily, answering that whoso named him well, being a poet, called him Love; or else being a lover of wisdom, called him Force; or being a cynic, called him Lust; or being a pietist, called him God. The last—thou seest!—(he said), a lie of Hell's, and all a partial course of the great circle of whirling dust (stirred by the iron rod of thought) that men call wisdom. So I looked deep in his beauty, and beheld its truth. The life of that fair youth was a whiz of violent little whirls, helical coils of emptiness, grey curls of misty and impalpable stuff, torn, crooked, all ways and none at once, but ever pressed in idiot circles; and one thing he lacked, now I looked from afar again, was rest. Thence I withdrew my sight, the eyeballs cracked with stain of my endeavour, and my will struck up with subtler skill than any man's that in fair Crete tracked through the labyrinth of Minos, and awoke the cry to call his master; grew a monster whirlwind of revolving smoke and then, mere nothing. But in me arose a peace profounder than Himalayan snows cooped in their crystalline ravines. I saw the ultimatum of the one wise law. I stood in the King's Chamber, by the tomb of slain Osiris, in the Pyramid and looked down the Great Gallery, deep, deep into the hollow of earth; grand gloom burned royally therein; I was well hid in the shadow; here I realised myself to be in that sepulchral sleep wherein were mirrored all these things of mystery. So the long passage steeply sliding ever

up to my feet where I stood in the emptiness ; at last a sure abiding only in absolute ceasing of all sense, and all perceived or understood or knowable ; thus, purple and intense, I beheld the past that leads to peace, from royal heights of mastery to sleep, from self-control imperial to an end, therefore I shaped the seven tiers of the ascending corridor into seven strokes of wisdom, seven harvests fair to reap from seven bitter sowings. Here ascend the armies of life's universal war chasing the pious pilgrim. First, his sight grew adamant, sun-bright, so that he saw aright. Second, his heart was noble, that he would live ever unto good. Third, in his speech stood tokens of this will, so pitiful and pure he spake, nor ever from him brake woe-winged words, nor slaver of the snake. Fourth, in each noble act of life he taught crystalline vigour of thought, so in each deed he was aright ; well-wrought all the man's work ; and fifth, this hero strife grew one with his whole life, so harmonised to the one after-end his every conscious and unconscious strain, his peace and pleasure and pain, his reflex life, his deepest-seated deed of mere brute muscle and nerve ! Thence, by great Will new-freed, the ardent life leaps, sixth, to Effort's tower, invoking the occult, the secret power, found in the void when all but Will is lost ; so, seventh, he bends it from its bodily station into the great abyss of Meditation, whence the firm level is at last his own and Rapture's royal throne is more than throne, sarcophagus ! an end ! an end ! Resounds the echo in the stone, incalculable myriads of tons poised in gigantic balance overhead, about, beneath. O blend your voices, angels of the awful earth ! dogs ! demons leaping into hideous birth from the imprisoned deserts of the Nile ! And thou, O habitant most dread, disastrous crocodile, hear thou the Law, and live, and win to peace !