

THE FATAL FORCE

“She
In the habiliments of the goddess Isis
That day appeared.”—*Antony and Cleopatra*, iii. 6. 16.

“Stoop not down, for a precipice lieth beneath the earth,
reached by a descending ladder which hath Seven Steps, and
therein is established the throne of an evil and fatal force.”—
ZOROASTER

PEOPLE.

RATOUM, *Queen of Egypt.*

PACHAD, her son (by the *son of herself and the LEPER*).

THE LEPER, *her divorced husband.*

THE KING OF SYRIA.

AMENHATEP, *High Priest.*

Chorus of Priests.

Soldiers of Egypt.

Syrian Troops.

PACHAD

WHY is thy back made stiff, unrighteous priest,
Thy knee reluctant? Thine old eyes, grown
blind,
Stare into silence, and behold no god
Longer. Thy forehead knows no reverence
Nor sign of worship. Or sits mutiny
Blasphemous on thy brows? For in thine eyes

I see full knowledge, and some glittering fire
Lurks in the rheumy corners ; yea, some fire
Malignant, terrible—nay, pitiable,
Thou poor fool stricken with senility,
How spurred to passion ? Yet behold thy god,
Horus, lest anger take benignancy
From his left hand and smite thee with his strength.
Thou hearest ? Nay, thou pitiful old man,
For I have loved thee. Yet my godhead must
Get Worship. Anger not the god, but stoop,
My faithful priest, and worship at my feet.

AMENHATEP.

I am most miserable. But truth must leap
In this tremendous moment from my lips,
Its long-shut barrier. For I pity thee
With my old heart's whole pity. Thou art young,
And beautiful, and proud, and dear to me,
Whom I have served thy life through. Now that love
Demands a deadlier service—to speak truth.
Thou art not Horus, but a man as I.

CHORUS.

Thou art not Horus, but a man. Thy life
Is not of the immortals, but, as ours,
Stands at the summons of the hooded death.

PACHAD.

Speak ! I have this much of a god in me—
I am not shaken at your cries ; my lips

Are silent at your blasphemy; my ears
Are strong to hear if there be truth at all
In your mixed murmurs: I command you, speak!

AMENHATEP.

The burden of the madness of the Queen
Lies on the land: the Syrian is near;
And she, believing that her godhead guards
Her people, sleeps. The altars are thrown down;
The people murmur. She hath done thee wrong,
But be thou mighty to avenge!

PACHAD.

To-day

I, Horus, am to grow Osiris. Yea,
Strange secret dreams of some mysterious fate
Godlike have come upon me, and the throne
Totters for your disloyalty.

AMENHATEP.

Beware!

How died thy father?

PACHAD.

That amazing god

Incarinate in him chose a nobler form,
And in my mother's body sought his home,
Whose double incarnation is divine
Beyond th' old stories. Yes, I am a god.

AMENHATEP.

Beware the fatal magic of her heart!
For she is great and evil, and her voice
Howls blasphemy against yet living gods.
Thou knowest not the story of thy birth,
The truth.

PACHAD.

Then speak the truth, if so a priest
May tune his tongue to anything but lies.

AMENHATEP.

Sixteen strange seasons mingle gold and grey
Since in this very temple she, the Queen,
Spake, and threw open to our reverent gaze
A royal womb made pregnant with that seed
Of which thou art the harvest. She spake thus:
“Princes, and people of the Egyptian land,
And broken priests of broken deities
Discrowned this hour, look up, behold your god!
For I am pregnant with my own son’s child,
The fruit of my desire’s desire. Most pure,
The single spirit of my godhead yearned
From death to reap dominion, and from birth
To pluck the blossom of its fruitful love,
And be the sun to ripen and the rain
To water it. My soul became the bride
To its own body, and my body leapt
With passion from mine own imperial loins
Begotten, and made strong from my own soul
To answer it. I hail thee, son of mine,

Thou royal offspring of a kingly sire,
Less kingly for the single flower of love!
I hail thee, son, the secret spouse of me,
King of my body and this realm to-day!
For lo! the child leapt up within my womb,
Hailing me mother, and my spirit leapt,
Hailing him brother! Son and spouse and king,
Exulting father of the royal soul
That lies here, loving me, assume thy crown
And sit beside me, equal to thy queen.
For look ye to the burning south, and see
The Sun grown amorous, and behold his fire
Leap to my godhead. For without a man
I single, I the mother, have conceived
Of my own loins, and made me no less god
Than all your gods! Ye people and ye priests,
Behold the burden of my life, and fear,
And know me Isis. Worship me, and praise
The goodliest ruler of the world, the queen
Of all the white immeasurable seas,
And that vast river of our sowing-time,
And of your Sun. Behold me made a god
Of my own godhead, and adore the sun
Of my queen's face, and worship ye the fount
And fertile river of my life. Bow down,
Ye people and ye priests, and worship me,
And him co-equal. I am very god!"
So spake the Queen; but I arose and said:

"Queen and our lord, we worship! Let the smoke
Of this divinest incense be a smell

Sweet to thy nostrils! For three times I cast
Its faint dust in the tripod, and three times
The smoke of adoration has gone up
To greet our gods; for the old gods are dead.”

Then there came forth a leper in the hall,
In the most holy temple. So amazed
All shrank. And he made prophecy and said:
“The child that shall be born of thee is called
Fear. He shall save a people from their sin;
For the old gods indeed go down to death,
But the new gods arise from rottenness.”
Then said the goddess: “I indeed am pure
In my impurity; immaculate
In misconception; maiden in my whoredom;
Chaste in my incest, being made a god
Through my own strength.” The leper with smooth
words

Turned, and went laughingly towards the west,
And took of his own leprosy and threw
Its foul flakes in the censer. So he passed,
Laughing, and on the altar the flame fell,
Till a great darkness was upon the room,
And only the Queen’s eyes blazed out. So all
Silently went, and left her naked there,
Crowned, sceptred, and exultant, till a chant
Rolled from her moving lips; and great fear fell
Upon us, and the flame lept, and we fled,
Worshipping. But the mood passed, and we see
A lecherous woman whose magician power

Is broken, and the balance of her mind
Made one with the fool's bauble, and her wand,
That was of steel and fire, like a reed, snapped!

PACHAD.

So lived my father. Tell me of his death.

AMENHATEP.

At thy first breath the gods were patient still,
Till the abomination filled its cup,
And hatred took her heart. She slew thy sire,
And made his body the banquet of her sin
In the infernal temple. "So," she said,
"I reap the incarnation of the god."
So, gloomy and hideous, she would prowl about
Seeking fresh human feasts, and bloody rites
Stained the white altar of the world. And yet
Her power is gone, and we behold her go,
Haggard and weary, through the palace courts
And through the temple, lusting for strange
loves
And horrible things, and thirsting for new steam
Of thickening blood upon her altar steps.
Her body wearies of desire, and fails
To satisfy the fury of her spirit;
The blood-feasts sicken her and yield no strength;
She is made one with hell, and violent force
Slips and is weakness, and extreme desire
Spends supple.

PACHAD.

I have heard you as a god
Immutable.

CHORUS.

Thou art as proud and calm
As statued Memnon. Thou art more than god
And less than man. Thine eyelids tremble not.

PACHAD.

I shall avenge it as a god. The land
Shall be made free.

AMENHATEP.

And the old gods have sway,
Re-born from incorruption.

PACHAD.

The old gods!
I must muse deeply. Keep your ancient ways
A little. I must play the part through so.

CHORUS.

In the ways of the North and the South
Whence the dark and the dayspring are drawn,
We pass with the song of the mouth
Of the notable Lord of the Dawn.
Unto Ra, the desire of the East, let the clamour of
singing proclaim
The fire of his name!

In the ways of the East and the West
Whence the night and the day are discrowned,
We pass with the beat of his breast,
And the breath of his crying is bound.
Unto Toum, the low Lord of the West, let the noise of
our chant be the breath
Proclaiming him Death!

In the ways of the depth and the height,
Where the multitude stars are at ease,
There is music and terrible light,
And the violent song of the seas.
Unto Mou, the most powerful Lord of the South, let
our worship declare
Him Lord of the Air!

In the mutable fields that are sown
Of a seed that is whiter than noon,
Whose harvest is beaten and blown
By the magical rays of the moon,
In the caverns and wharves of the wind, in the
desolate seas of the air,
Revolveth our prayer!

In the sands and the desert of death,
In the horrible flowerless lands,
In the fields that the rain and the breath
Of the sun make as gold as the sands
With ripening wheat, in the earth, in the infinite
realm of its seed,
The hearts of us bleed.

In the wonderful flowers of the foam,
Blue billows and breakers grown grey,
When the storm sweeps triumphantly home
From the bed of the violate day,
In the furious waves of the sea, wild world of tem-
pestuous night,
Our song is as light!

In the tumult of manifold fire,
Multitudinous mutable feet
That dance to an infinite lyre
On the heart of the world as they beat,
In the flowers of the bride of the flame, in the
warrior Lord of the Fire,
There burns our desire!

AMENHATEP.

Cry now, bewail the broken house, bewail
The ruin of the land; cry out on Fate!

CHORUS.

Slow wheels of unbegotten hate
And changeless circles of desire,
Formless creations uncreate,
Swift fountains of ungathered fire,
The misty counterpoise of time,
Dim winds of ocean and sublime
Pyramids of forgotten foam
Whirling, vague cones of shapeless sleep
And infinite dreams, and stars that roam,

And comets moving through the deep
Unfathomable skies,
Darker for moonlight, and the glowworm eyes
Of dusky women that were stars,
And paler curves of the immutable bars
That line the universe with light,
Great eagle-flights of mystic moons
That dip, while the dull midnight swoons
About the skirts of Night:
These bowed and shaped themselves and said:
“It shall be thus!”
And the intolerable luminous
Death that is god bent down his head
And answered: “Thus immutably,
Above all days and deeds, shall be!”
And the great Light that is above all gods
Lifted his calm brow, spake, and all the seas,
And all the air, and all the periods
Of seasons and of stars gave ear, and these
Vaults of heaven heard
The great white Light that shaped its secrecies
Into one holy terrible word,
Higher than all words spoken; for He said:
“Death is made change, and only change is dead.”
For the most holy spirit of a man
Burns through the limit of the wheels that ran
Through all the unrelenting skies
When Icarus died,
And leaps, the flight of wise omnipotent eyes,
When Daedalus espied

A holy habitation for the shrine
Solitary, 'mid the night of broken brine
That foamed like starlight round the desolate shore.
So to the mine of that crystalline ore
Golden, the electric spark of man is drawn
Deep in the bosom of the world, to soar
New-fledged, an eagle to the dazzling dawn
With lidless eyes undazzled, to arise,
Son of the morning, to the Southern skies ;
And fling its wild chant higher at the fall
Of even, and of bright Hyperion ;
To mix its fire with dew, to call
The spirit of the limitless air, made one
In the amazing essence of all light.
Limitless, emanation of the might
Of the great Light above all gods, the fire
Of our supreme desire,
So out of grievous labyrinths of the mind
The soul's desire may find
Some passionate thread, the clear note of a bird,
To make the dark ways of the gods as light,
And bring forth music from slow chants unheard,
And visions from the fathomless night.
So is the spirit of the loftier man
Made holy and most strong against his fate ;
So is the desolate visage of the wan
Lord of Amenti covered, and the gate
Of Ra made perfect. So the waters flow
Over the earth, throughout the sea,
Till all its deserts glow,

And all its salt springs vanish, and night flee
The pinions of the day wide-spread, and pure
Fresh fountains of sweet water that endure
Assume the crown of the wide world, and lend
A star of many summits to his head
That rules his fate and compasses his end.
And seeks the holy mountain of the dead
To draw dead fire, and breathe, and give it life !

But thou, be strong for strife,
And, as a god, cry out, and let there be
The mark of many footsteps on the sea
Of angels hastening to fulfil
Thy supreme, single will !
Alone, intense, unmoved, not made for change,
Let thy one godhead rise
To move like morning, and like day to range,
A furnace for the skies,
That all men cry : "The uncreated God !
Formless, ineffable, just, whose period
Is as his name, Eternity !" So bear
The sceptre of the air !
So mayest thou avenge, all-seeing, blind,
The wrath of this consuming fire, that licks
The rafters and the portals of the house,
The gateways of the kingdom, where behind
Lurk ruinous fates and consequence ; where fix
Their fangs the scorpions ; where hide their brows
The shamed protectors of the Egyptian land.
Go forth avenging ; men shall understand

And worship, seeing justice as a spouse
Lean on thine iron hand.

For Murder walks by night, and hides her face,
But righteous Wrath in the light, and knows his place ;
For hate of a mother is ill, and the lightning flashes,
But foil a harlot's will, burn the earth to ashes,
Cleanse the incestuous sty of a whore's desire,
Scatter the dung to the sky, and burn her with fire !
So the avenging master shall cleanse his fate of shame,
Set his seal of disaster, a royal seal to his name.

[Exeunt.]

PACHAD.

I am not Horus, but I shall be King.

Enter LEPER.

THE LEPER.

I am a leper, but I am the king.

PACHAD.

Monstrous illegible horror, let thy mouth
Frame from its charnel-house some pregnant word
Intelligible.

THE LEPER.

I am the king ; thy mother's limbs
Clung fast to mine when I begot thy father.

PACHAD.

He died in battle ; thou art not the king.

THE LEPER.

I did not fall in battle ; but my queen
Saw on my breast the livid mark of sin
That was the leprosy of her own soul,
And drove me forth to compass by disgrace
With infamies ineffable.

PACHAD.

I know ;
I shall avenge. The old gods come again.

THE LEPER.

Nay! I have lived through all these barren years,
Discrowned, diseased, abominable, cast out,
And meditating on the event of life,
And that initiated Hope that we,
Royal, inherit, of the final life,
Nor newer incarnation, and possessed
Of strange powers, who have moved about this court
Loathed, and unrecognised, and shunned, have thought
That the old bondage was as terrible
As thine incestuous mother's iron hand,
Rending the entrails of her growing realm
To seek her bloody fate, whose violence
Even now makes the abyss of wrath divine
Boil in the deep. Thou mayest be that great
Osiris, bidding man's high soul be free,
Justified in its own higher self, made pure
And perfect in its own eyes, being a god.
Destroy this priestcraft! We are priests indeed,

Highest among the secret ones ; and we—
See where our heritage is made ; I, king,
A leper, and thyself, the hideous fruit
Of what strange poisons ? But in mine own self
I am the king and chief of all the priests ;
And thou, in thine own eyes, art a young god,
Strong, beautiful, and lithe, a leaping fawn
Upon the mountains.

PACHAD.

Yea, I am a god.

I am fire against the fountain of my birth,
The storm upon the earth that nurtured me !
Leave me : we twain have no more words to speak.

THE LEPER.

Neither in heaven nor in hell. I go,
The dead king, worshipping the living man. *[Exit.*

PACHAD.

I have been a god so long, my thoughts run halt
From many contemplations. Like the flow
Of a slow river deep and beautiful,
My even life moved onward to full scope,
The ocean of profounder deity,
And—suddenly—the cataract ! My soul,
Centered eternally upon itself,
Comprehends hardly all this violence
Of wayward men intemperate. I am calm,
And contemplate, without a muscle moved

Or nerve set shrieking, all these ruinous deeds
And dissolution of the royal house.
I see this grey unnatural mother of mine
Now, as she is, disrobed of deity,
And like some reeling procuress grown wolf
By infamous bewitchment, haunt the stairs,
And pluck the young men by the robe, and take
The maidens for her sacrifice, and burn
With great unquenchable dead lustrous eyes
Toward impossible things grown possible
In Egypt. I will cleanse the land of this.
Let me remember I am yet a god!

Re-enter THE LEPER.

THE LEPER.

Thou must be brought before her presently
Borne in a coffin. See thou fill it not,
But take the lion's mask and play his part
Before the throne. Be ready, and be strong.

PACHAD.

I shall do so. Come, let us go together
In hateful love and sacrilegious hate,
Disease and godhead. I am still the god.

[Exeunt.

Enter RATOUM.

RATOUM.

I stood upon the desert, and my eyes
Beheld the splendid and supernal dawn
Flame underneath the single star that burns

Within the gateway of the golden East
To rule my fate ; but I have conquered Fate
Thus far, that I am perfect in myself,
The absolute unity and triple power
Engrafted. For the foolish people see
An old grey woman, wicked, not divine,
Who shall this hour assume the royal self
And the old godhead, and the lithe strong limbs
And supple loins and splendid bosom bare
Full of bright milk, the breast of all the world.
This lesser mastery I have made mine-own
By strange devices, by unheard-of ways
Of wisdom, by strong sins, and magical
Rituals made righteous of their own excess
Of horror ; but I have not made myself
So absolute as I shall do to-day
In this new infamy. For I must pass
Desolate into the dusk of things again,
Having risen so far to fall to the abyss,
Deeper for exaltation ; I must go
Wailing and naked into the inane
Cavernous shrineless place of misery,
Forgetful, hateful, impotent, except
The last initiation seize my soul,
And fling me into Isis' very self,
The immortal, mortal. Let me know this night
Whether my place is found among the stars
That wander in the deep, or made secure
As the high throne of her that dwells in heaven,
Fruitful for life and death, Wisdom her name,

The mother of all things, the full desire,
The immitigable, intelligible one,
Reality beyond realities!
This hour the foolish ones shall see their souls
Shrink at my manifest deity. This night
My spirit on my spirit shall beget
Myself for my own child. Behold! they come,
Fantastically moving through the dance,
The many mourners, and the fatal bier
Looms in the dimness of the anteroom.
It is enough. My hour is at hand!

CHORUS *enter and circumambulate.*

Even as the traitor's breath
Goeth forth, he perisheth
By the secret sibilant word that is spoken unto death.

Even as the profane hand
Reacheth to the sacred sand,
Fire consumes him that his name be forgotten in
the land.

Even as the wicked eye
Seeks the mysteries to spy,
So the blindness of the gods takes his spirit : he
shall die.

Even as the evil priest,
Poisoned by the sacred feast,
Changes by its seven powers to the misbegotten
beast.

Even as the powers of ill,
Broken by the wanded will,
Shriek about the holy place, vain and vague and
terrible :

Even as the lords of hell,
Chained in fires before the spell,
Strain upon the sightless steel, break not fetters
nor compel :

So be distant, O profane!
Children of the hurricane!
Lest the sword of fire destroy, lest the ways of
death be plain!

So depart, and so be wise,
Lest your perishable eyes
Look upon the formless fire, see the maiden sacrifice!

So depart, and secret flame
Burn upon the stone of shame,
That the holy ones may hear music of the sleepless
Name!

Now the sacred and obscene
Kiss, the pure and the unclean
Mingle in the incense steaming up before the
goddess queen.

Holy, holy, holy spouse
Of the sun-engirdled house,
With the secret symbol burning on thy multiscient
brows!

Hear, O hear the mystic song
Of the serpent-moving throng,
Isis mother, Isis maiden, Isis beautiful and strong!

Even as the traitor's breath
Goeth forth, he perisheth
By the secret sibilant word that is spoken unto death.

RATOUM.

The hour is given unto death. Bring in
Dead Horus, for the night is shed above.

[Coffin brought in.]

CHORUS.

The noise of the wind of the winter; the sound
Of the wings of the charioted night;
The song of the sons of the seas profound;
The thunder of death; the might
Of the eloquent silence of black light!

RATOUM.

The noise of many planets fallen far!

CHORUS.

Death listens for the voice of life; night waits
The dawn of wisdom: winter seeks the spring!

RATOUM.

The music of all stars arisen; the breath
Of God upon the valley of the dead!

CHORUS.

The silence of the awaiting soul asleep!

RATOUM.

The murmur of the fountain of my life!

CHORUS.

The whole dead universe awaits the Word.

RATOUM.

Now is the hour of life; my voice leaps up
In the dim halls of death, and kindling flame
Roars like the tempest through forgetfulness.
This is my son, whose father is my son,
From my own womb complete and absolute,
And in this strong perfection of myself
Stands the triumphant power of my desire,
Manifest over self, and man, and god!
For in the sacred coffin lies his corpse
Who shall arise at the enormous word
Of my creating deity; his life
Shall quicken in him, and the dead man rise,
Osiris; and all power be manifest
In our supreme reunion; let the priest
Cast incense on the fire, upon the ground
Let water of the fertilising Nile
Be spilt, because these dark maternal breasts
That gave their milk to that divinest child
Are not yet full of the transcending stream
That knows its fountain in my deity.

The incense fumes before me: I am come,
Isis, within this body that ye know,
Transmuting! Look upon me, ye blind eyes!
Behold, dull souls and ignorant desires!
See if I be not altogether god!

*[She assumes the appearance of her mature beauty,
standing before them with the wand upraised.]*

Wonder and worship! Sing to me the song
Of the extreme spring! Rejoice in my great strength
And infinite youth and new fertility,
And lave your foreheads in this holy milk
That springs, the fountain of humanity,
Luminous in the temple! Raise the hymn.

CHORUS.

Through fields of foam ungarnered sweeps
The fury of the wind of dawn;
Through fiery desolation creeps
The water of the wind withdrawn.
With fire and water consecrate
The foam and fire are recreate.
With air uniting fire and water,
The springtide's unbegotten daughter
Blossoms in oceans of blue air,
Flowers of new spring to bear.

The sorrowful twin fishes glide
Silent and sacred into sleep;
The joyful Ram exalts his pride,
Seeing the forehead of the deep

Glow from his palace, as the sun
Leaps to the spring, whose coursers run
 Flaming before their golden master,
 As death and winter and disaster
Fall from the Archer's bitter kiss
Fast to their mute abyss.

The pale sweet blooms of lotos burn ;
 The scent of spring is in the soul ;
Men's spirits to the loftiest turn ;
 Light is extended and made whole.
The waters of the whispering Nile
Lisp of their loves a little while,
 Then break, like songsters, into sighing,
 Because the lazy days are dying ;
And swift and tawny streams must rise
World's world to fertilise.

The lotos is afire for love,
 Its yearnings are immortal still ;
But in its bosom, fed thereof,
 Lust, like a child, will have his will.
Immortal fervour, strangely blent
With mystic sensual sacrament,
 Fills up its cup ; its petals tremble
 With faint desires that dissemble
The fierce intention to be wed,
One with the spring sun's head.

The fountains of the river yearn
 Toward the sacred temple-walls,

They foam upon the sands that burn
 With spring's delirious festivals.
They flash upon the gleaming ways,
They cry, they chant aloud the praise
 Of Isis, and our temple kisses
 Their flowery water-wildernesses,
Whose foamheads nestle to the stones
With slumberous antiphones.

All birds and beasts and fish are fain
 To mingle passion with the hope
All creatures hold, that cycled pain
 May make its stream the wider scope
Of many lives and changing law,
Till to the sacred fountains draw
 Essences of dim being, mated
 With lofty substance uncreated,
Concluding the full period
That makes all being God.

PACHAD (*disguised in the mask of a lion*).

I lift the censer. Hail, immortal queen,
From the vast hall of death! Dead Horus cries
Towards the dawn. Bid me awake, O mother!
O mother! from the darkness of the tomb,
That live Osiris may cry back to thee,
O spouse! O sister! from the halls of life,
The profound lake, the immeasurable depth,
The sea of the three Loves! O mother, mother!
Isis, the voice that even Amenti hears,

Speak, that I rise from chaos, from the world
Of shapeless and illusionary forms,
Of dead men's husks, and unsubstantial things.
O mother, mother, mother! I arise!

RATOUM.

Horus, dread godhead, child of me, arise!
Arise Osiris, to the sacred rites
And marriage-bed of fuller deity.
Now, at the serpent-motion of this wand,
Rise from the dead! Arise, dead Horus, rise
To be Osiris. Isis speaks! Arise!

*[The coffin is opened. The leper is raised out of
it swathed in bandages.*

Out of the sleep of ages wake and live!

[The wrappings fall off.

THE LEPER.

I am the resurrection and the death!

*[Ratoum falls back shrieking. The priests raise
a chant to stifle the sound.*

PACHAD (*tearing off his mask*).

I am the hideous poison of thy veins
And foulest fruit of thy incestuous womb.

RATOUM.

I am thy mother! I have nurtured thee
With woman's tenderness and godhead's strength.

PACHAD.

I am the avenger of my own false birth.

RATOUM.

I have loved thee ever ; I have made thee god.

PACHAD.

I hate myself, and therefore I hate thee.

RATOUM.

I am still goddess, still desire thy love.
That leper lies : thou art indeed a god.

PACHAD.

I am a god to execute my will.
[Threatens her with his dagger.]

RATOUM.

Mercy! Thou canst not strike a woman down!

PACHAD.

So! The thin casing of the godhead rots,
Mere mummy-cloth : the rotten corpse within,
Dust and corruption! I am still the god,
And gods slay women : therefore I slay thee.

RATOUM.

Then thou shalt seem me once again a god!
*[By a tremendous effort she towers before him.
Silently they gaze at one another for a while,
he vainly endeavouring to force himself to
strike. At last she collapses into the throne,
and he springs forward and drives his knife
into her.]*

THE LEPER.

It is finished! The sacrament is made! The god
Has flamed within the altar-cake: 'tis done!

[*Silence: presently the leper breaks into a horrible, silent, smooth laughter. Again silence.*]

PACHAD.

I am done with godhead: let me be a man.

CHORUS.

Hail, Pachad, king of Egypt and the Nile!
Hail, Pachad, Lord of the two lands, all hail!

PACHAD.

King of himself and lord of life and death,
No lesser throne! I have borne me as a god,
Avenging on my nearest blood the sin
That brought me shameful to the shameless light.
I have not faltered nor turned back at all,
Nor moved my purpose for a moment's thought.
Nor will I now. The god is gone from me,
And as a man I feel the living shame
Of my existence, and the biting brand
Of murder set upon me, and the sting
Of my discrowned forehead. I shall die
Having this proof of my own nobleness
To soothe the rancour of my stricken soul
In the abodes of night, that I have dared,
With the first knowledge to make good my
spirit
Against its fate, to steel my flinching heart

Against all men, dominions, shapes, and powers,
Seen and unseen, to justice and to truth,
Sought out by desolate ways of hateful deeds,
And so set free myself from my own fate,
Whom I will smite to end the coil of things
Here, to begin—what life? For Life I know
Stands like a living sentinel behind
The rugged barrier of death, the gates
Where the rude valley narrows, and man hears
The steep and terrible cataract of time
Break, and lose shape and substance in the
foam

And spray of an eternity of air!
My death, and not my life, may crown me king!
So let me not be buried in that state
Due to the hateful rank that I abjure
By this proud act, but let my monument
Say to succeeding peoples and dim tribes
Unthought of: "This was born a living man
Bound, and he cut the chain of circumstance,
And spat on Fate." And all the priests shall say
And all the people: "Verily and Amen."

[Stabs himself.]

CHORUS.

Spirit of the Gods! White noon,
Of tremendous flashing fire,
Spirit of the moon!
Trembling essence of desire
Triple-tongued, thy flame is kindled

At the fountain-heads of light ;
Fanned to whirling fiery light,
As the spark of life is dwindled
In the sacramental span,
In the star that flashes white
In the body of a man ;
By the swart Osirian power,
If, when strikes the holy hour
Of the holy sacrifice,
Angels swoon from starry homes
Full of inexpressive eyes,
That the blood that swells and foams
Lighten with the fervid air,
To create from death's despair
Masteries of music, domes
Gilded with the splendid essence of the highest
 hope of man ;
If the sombre stream that ran
From the smitten breast be kindled with the
 sacrificial fire :
If the altar set above
In the palaces of love
Glow with this, the perfect passion
And sublime desire
From the clay of Fate to fashion
His own glory, to inspire
Worlds impossible to thought
With the beauties, subtly wrought,
Of his own creative strength.
Spirit of the Gods ! O single,

Sacred, secret, let the length
East and west, the depth and height,
North and south, with music tingle,
Ring with battled clarion choirs of the far-resound-
ing light!
Let the might
Of Osirian sacrifice
Dwell upon the self-slain king!
Consecrate him, consecrate him, consecrate, ye
holy ones,
The imperial mind
Thrice, and thrice the higher soul,
Thrice the spirit, till the sun's
Utter glory burn upon him, till the freed Osiris find
He is god above mankind,
Thrice united unto man,
As the living gold that ran
Molten to the fiery sea,
Mixed in its eternity.
Spirit of the Gods! Unite
Streams of sacramental light
In the soul, thrice purified,
Consecrated thrice,
Till Osiris justified
In the supreme sacrifice
Take his kingdom. Hear the cry
That the wailing vultures make,
Circling in the blackening sky
Over the abysmal lake.
Spirit, for our spirit's sake

Give the token of thy fire
Trident in the lambent air,
Till our spirits unaware
Worship and aspire!
Hear, beyond all periods,
Timeless, formless, multiform,
Thou, supreme above the storm,
Spirit of the Holy Ones, Spirit of the Gods!

Enter Messenger.

MESSENGER.

The battle rages: even now the shock
Of hostile spears makes the loud earth resound,
The wide sky tremble.

AMENHATEP.

Here lies Horus dead,
There Isis slain. We have no leader left.

MESSENGER.

The fight is doubtful. We may conquer still.

AMENHATEP.

By this shed blood and desecrated shrine
And horrible hour of madness, may it be
That all the evil fortune of the land,
Created of these dead iniquities,
Burn its foul flame out. Are ye not appeased,
Even ye, O powers of Evil, at this shame
And sacrilege? And ye, Great Powers of Good,

Hath not enough of misery been wrought,
Enough of expiation? We have sinned,
But our iniquity he purged away,
Who as avenger hath denied his life,
To be made one with ye. O by his blood
And strong desire of holiness, and might
And justice, let him mediate between
And mitigate your anger, that the name
Of Egypt may not perish utterly.
Make, make and end!

THE LEPER.

All things must work themselves
To their own end. Created sin grown strong
Must claim its guerdon. Ye abase yourselves
Well for repentance; but ye shall not ward
With tears and prayers the ruin ye have made,
Nor banish the enormous deities
Of judgment so invoked by any prayers,
Or perfumes or libations. What must be
Will be. Material succour ye demand
In vain. But ye may purify yourselves.

AMENHATEP.

Knows then thy prophecy of our final doom?

THE LEPER.

Inquire not of your fate! Myself do know,
Mayhap. Ye shall know. I await the event.

AMENHATEP.

We shall be patient, and we shall be strong.

THE LEPER.

The noise of rushing feet! The corridor
Rings with their scurrying fear. This is the end.

*[Enter a flying soldier, crying aloud, and seeks
a hiding-place.]*

Speak not, thou trembling slave: we understand!

*[The soldier slips on the marble floor, and lies
groaning.]*

AMENHATEP.

See that due silence greets catastrophe!
No word from now without command of mine.

*[Silence. Then grows a noise of men fighting,
&c ; above this after a while rises a shrill
laughter, terrifying to hear. Then cries of
victory and the triumphant laugh of a
great conqueror. His heavy step, and that
of his staff, &c., is next heard coming
masterfully down the corridor. The soldier
gives a shriek.]*

THE LEPER.

The Syrian must not see a cur like this
Cower at death. For Egypt's honour, then!

Give me that spear. [*Aside.*] That royalty's own
hand
Should send this thing to his long misery!
[*Taking a spear, he runs through the soldier.*]

The KING OF SYRIA, attended, enters.

KING OF SYRIA.

Your armies beaten back before my face,
Your weapons broken, I am come to take
The crown from her pale brows that sitteth there.

THE LEPER.

The Queen is dead: I am the King of Egypt.
To-day I saved the house from its own shame
By strange ways: I will strike one blow to save
The land from its invaders. In the name
Of all our gods, I here invoke on thee
The spirit of my leprosy. Have at you!

[*Springs at the King of Syria, only to be
transfixed on his drawn sword; but he
succeeds in clasping the king, who staggers.
His soldiers, with a shout, rush forward,
drag down the Leper and attack the priests.
All are slain. Silence: then a shield drops,
clanging on the ground.*]

KING OF SYRIA (*assuming crown and sitting
on throne*).

Salute the conqueror of the Egyptian land!
[*The soldiers salute and cheer.*]

I am a leper: get ye hence! *[Exeunt soldiers.*
Unclean! *[Silence.*

This was the hour that my ambitious hopes
Centered upon; and now I grasp the hour—
So fares mortality. *[Silence.*
Unclean! unclean!

CURTAIN.