

THE TRIUMPH OF PAN

I

THERE are three gods who in their talons hold me;
They dig within my breast
Their claws; beneath wide-feathered wings they fold
me,
Crying, "Ah! here is rest"
They lie! for they, in sooth,
Are hungry for my youth,
And I in vain ask pity of their power,
For they have made me theirs in one short hour.

II

The first a woman, with burning glances mingled
With longings soft and pure;
And me, with dread fore-knowledge, she hath singled
As one that is right sure
To ease her fierce desire
With my consuming fire.
But while I love her she consumeth me;
She withereth my soul, that erst was free.

III

The second god laughs loud upon my plaining,
 Seeing in me his prey;
He girds austerely at my dreadful straining
 To hold myself in play:
 He hath no pity now;
 His great hand on my brow
Brings visions never to be known of me
Till I be one with his mad mystery.

IV

Lastly, there is one Great One, cold and burning,
 Craft and hot in lust,
Who would make me a Sapphist and an Urning,
 A Lesbian of the dust.
 He sees the immortal light
 Break through me to the night,
Where Love is cast in impotent despair
From her communion with the upper air.

V

The dung of all ages clings unto him,
 And a fierce light shines through;
They are the dead who once, long, long since, knew him:
 The Pagan and the Jew
 Have lent him, one by one,
 Seed with their orison,
But he hath spurned their offerings, seeking me,
A god, a victim slain in majesty.

VI

Wherefore the current of my soul hath broken
 The bounds of sensual life,
And I am grown a god, a sinewy token
 Of Pan's most ardent strife;
 I am his own; I seem
 The shadow of his dream,
As he is spinning thoughts of form and sense
Out of the formless void, stark, cold and dense.

VII

So, in my sorrow, I have broken heedless
 From things of sense and change;
What should I seek who, having all, am needless
 To all of them that range
 The realm of softer thought?
 O Master! thou hast wrought
This bitter burning in my breast; I dwell,
For ever, happy in the heart of hell.

VIII

I have cast out the arrows of existence
 From my lost heart; I see
Thee only in the strong chain of insistence;
 O Master! I am free!
 For thou hast slain desire,
 Save for thine inmost fire:
I hear thee calling from the wings of Time,
And, answering, my soul is made sublime.

IX

Here in the dust I lie, a broken shadow,
 A thing unsought, alone;
A bended blade of grass in the red meadow
 Where lie the gut and bone
 Of those fierce gods who granted
 The heart that burned and panted,
To break at last in one tremendous beat,
Scattering its dolorous incense at their feet.

X

The way is dark and lone, but I am fearless,
 Fearless as death in love;
My heart is broken, but mine eyes are tearless:
 I seek the hidden grove
 Where Pan plays to the trees,
 The nymphs, the fauns, the breeze,
And the sick satyr with his syren-song
Makes the world ache with longing. I am strong.

XI

This I can bear, though I am lone and cheerless,
 A withered fruit of spring;
This I can bear, for all my soul is fearless,
 So shall my soul not sing?
 Rejoice that I am thine,
 That I have given thee wine
From out my virgin heart, my stainless soul;
I am corrupted utterly; and whole.

XII

The slavish singers of the barren years,
 What have they left to say?
Upon the Moribund they waste weak tears,
 And slobber o'er dull day.
 But we, my God, have been
 Sublimely wise; obscene
In passion; and her light is round us strown;
We have enmeshed in passion's web the Unknown.

XIII

We found sleeping; yea, the Panic revel
 Had drawn his spirit far;
Asleep, he bore the aspect of a devil;
 Awake, the morning star
 Flashed in his eyes; oh, scan
 The vision of great Pan;
Thrust tongue and limbs against his pulsing side,
And thou shalt know the dayspring as a bride!

XIV

The fire of generation, the salt juices
 Within my body rare,
Shall remedy our winter-time abuses;
 The odour of thy hair,
 Thy feet, thy hands, shall bring
 Again the Pagan spring,
And from our bodies' union men shall know
To cast the veil from the sad face of woe,

XV

And know her utterly; her blazing eyes
 Shall burn out in the sun,
And as she groweth blind a new surprise
 Shall dawn on everyone
 That gazes on her there;
 There shall be no despair,
But Pan! Pan! Pan! and all the world shall be
Mingled in one wild burning ecstasy.

XVI

They cast out Love, but Love for aye hath dwelling,
 Sleeping, within the spirit;
They have murdered Joy, but Joy reborn is swelling
 In earth, and shall inherit
 Anew the realm of Time,
 And earth shall grow sublime
For ages, till our seed return to those
Who gave youth wisdom with the Staff and Rose.

XVII

The light is fading from the listening skies;
 We have seen the golden band
That flashed with morning breezes on our eyes:
 The old gray silent land
 Bursts through the husk of sense,
 And the air grows immense
With looming shadows of a world so wide,
It sways the ether as the moon the tide.

XVIII

The sense of dawn grows louder in men's ears,
 Here, in the waiting west;
The veil of darkness by a million spears
 Is pierced, and the fair breast
 of dawn most purely bleeds,
 And from her blood the seeds,
Scattered of old before the cross in gloom
Arose, spring forth, and bear the golden doom.

XIX

Now have we passed the dark fate's outer portal,
 And sit enthroned within
The Temple that was cast by hate immortal
 Into a hell of sin.
 But we anointed wait
 The trumpet-call of Fate,
Who casts the lot of ages that shall pass,
As in a mirror, before thy soul's dark glass.

XX

Oh, wiser they who share the day's dull splendour
 Of aimless thought and deed?
Oh, braver they who make a tired surrender
 For fear that they should belled
 But life no pity knows;
 The sun burns, the dawn grows;
The terror of death, the pangs of birth, are hers,
The yearning soul of the formless universe.

XXI

The ways have parted, and the sun is glowing
 Over the eternal sand,
And the endless road grows steeper; we are going
 Into a nameless land.
 Time and the gods shall lend
 Their wisdom to the end;
And we shall know what lies beyond, and see
The shadows of the olden Mystery.

XXII

No way may lead us back; our track is hidden
 In dust and sand and grass,
For lo! we journey on a road forbidden,
 Where no man sees us pass.
 It may be we shall find
 The secret dumb and blind;
But the joy of terror seizes us; no stay
We make, for who looks back shall lose the way.

XXIII

Whither and *whence* have merged into the roaring
 Of angry storm-tossed seas;
Into the void of time and space still soaring,
 We travel with the breeze
 That the old mouth of Time
 Breathes in a fitful rime,
And is lost in the upper air serene and pure,
Where, life transcended, light is stern and sure.

XXIV

There is enchantment in the stony valley;
 The star-lit wooden glen
Brings murmured echoes to us musically;
 We see the moor and fen,
 The moon-lit mountain snow,
 Rain on the corn below,
The silver crescent of the tropic moon,
The day-dawn path with unguessed rapture strewn.

XXV

And we have passed the bounds of man's derision;
 Red-glaring witches howl
Striking at us in vain in mad division
 Of helm and plume and cowl.
 Swart, grinning warlocks swive
 Each other, and they strive
To set envenomed fangs in us, lest we
Be curtailed by the veil of Mystery.

XXVI

O hell-locked Mother of divine despair,
 With gray eyes bright with pain;
O yearning Maiden with the streaming hair,
 We called thee not in vain;
 The shadowy pain is thine,
 But we have brought thee wine,
Fresh from the Bacchic vats, and foaming grape
And must shall ease thy pain, and lend thee shape!

XXVII

Descent! . . . The airy dusk grows dark with boding
 Of a new after-birth;
The toiling earth gives tokens of unloading
 The secret; in her mirth
 Shall be the Pagan spring,
 And joyous echoing
O'er all her valleys and her hills that be
Set in the shadow of eternity.

XXVIII

The shadows of things lie in the old gray Hades,
 Twin-born of man's sad mind;
The formless echoes of old wars; the ladies
 Of old, to warriors kind,
 Enchant us; we are fain
 To bring the past again
Into the earth, but we will crush the dream,
And wallow sweating in the mountain-stream,

XXIX

And storm the mountains; we are sick of dreaming
 Of a dim past unknown;
Oh! for the sight once more of red blood streaming,
 Of rotting warrior-bone,
 Of eagles hovering far
 Around the field of war,
Of lust and love and longing breaking through
The chill gray garb of life to flame anew.

XXX

The storied mystery of scarlet fancies
 Beats down upon my skull;
The far-strung glamour of the spheres enhances
 The vision wide and full,
 The curtain lifts, and bares
 A host of fulfilled prayers,
Hopes hidden in the gray garb of the earth
That wait some angel-trail for path to birth.

XXXI

O golden singers of the vanished ages,
 O bards of olden fame,
Look down, look down upon my unscarred pages,
 And touch my screed with flame;
 Ah! let me be renewed
 From your proud solitude;
Grant me the magic of the storied years,
Whose hearts are flame, fringed by your glorious tears.

XXXII

The Gods who hold me fawn upon me, seeking
 To reach my inmost core,
But they are mine, within me ever speaking;
 I silence them; they roar,
 Striving to speak, but I
 Hold them in check; they lie
Till I shall call them forth to my behest
To flood the world with rapture, or with rest.

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XXXIII

O world of shadows, slowly disappearing
 Under the Master's wand!
O dawn of daylight, slowly, slowly nearing
 From out the dark beyond!
 Was it in vain I saw
 The vision of the law
Growing still keener in the sharp blue air,
Unsummoned forth by incense or by prayer?

XXXIV

I know not, but I know the way is darkened
 By myriad pilgrim feet;
I only know that my lone ear hath hearkened
 Unto the rhythmic beat
 Of thund'rous, deafening drums,
 Unto whose spell succumbs
The outlawed watcher by the inner gate,
Who through the hours of gloom doth meditate.

XXXV

Yea! And from me the world hath slowly faded;
 I find no light at all.
Only the long, still, shadowy things, unaided,
 Creep upwards for a fall
 Into the dark abyss
 Where time's black serpents hiss
Their hateful pæan of the old despair,
Their envy of the blue crystalline air.

XXXVI

And lo! We find the Panic revel over,
 The cups down-turned; the grape
Is trampled level with the lowly clover;
 There is no brooding shape,
 Bright-eyed, bright-winged, and strong
 As a piped mountain-song
In the keen Alpine air: No joy is here,
Only the shadow of man's foolish fear.

XXXVII

The revellers are fled; where, no man knoweth,
 Save it be whence they came;
The chill, dull wind of desolation bloweth
 Upon the flickering flame
 Of the old lost delight:
 There is no garland bright
On the brows of the old Hermaphrodite, whose eyes
Glowed ever newly once with new surprise.

XXXVIII

Oh, shadows, shadows, shadows, shadows ever;
 They lisp, the fools, their song:
But where is fled the lusty, wild endeavour
 To right the ancient wrong?
 They mouth their feeble prayer
 Unto the empty air. . . .
But we will bring the past, the past, again,
The lust of joy, the rapture and the pain!

XXXIX

It shall be mine, O Master, in my singing
 To call the brooding light
Back to the earth; would that my soul were winging
 To victory through the night!
 Yea! And it shall be mine
 To pour the sacred wine,
And make men drunk with ecstasy as I,
Drunken with joy whether I live or die.

XL

What do they know of joy? They tamely wander
 In barren paths and straight;
With down-cast modest eyes they sit and ponder
 Outside the mystic gate.
 But roses, roses flame,
 As ever, since they came
From the wild marriage-bed of young Desire,
And younger Love, the children of the Fire.

XLI

Give me thy wine! So shall my song unending
 Break through the barren prayer
Of fear and fashion; let the mystic blending
 Of perfumes fill the air
 With hues of light and things
 Unutterable; the stings
Of joy shall pierce men's hearts, and there shall be
Unending, throbbing, passioned ecstasy.

XLII

Grant me again thy lyre! Let me awaken
 The old eternal spring;
So shall each soul with pangs of birth be shaken,
 Let the good juices sting.
 The song I craved is mine,
 Thy song of blood and brine;
Men shall stand naked, unashamed and free,
To flaunt abroad their new-born ecstasy!

XLIII

Nor dream I, for too surely men shall waken,
 Now that the day is born,
And all thy chosen ones shall be o'ertaken
 By the young feet of morn.
 Grant me, Eros, thy kiss,
 That I may speak thy bliss—
The revel and the rapture and the feast,
The Pæan, and the Crowning of the Beast!

XLIV

Yea! And the lyre is mine, and I am fearless,
 Naked, and free, and young;
The torch is out; no longer night is cheerless;
 The hot young day is sprung
 From out the loins of God!
 Rise from the barren sod,
Raise high the Pæan of the God in Man!
Io Triumphe! Hail to the new-born Pan!