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\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A LEGEND OF OLD PERSIA AND OTHER POEMS \*\*\*

**A LEGEND OF OLD PERSIA  
AND OTHER POEMS.**

**BY**

**A. B. S. TENNYSON.**

**LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN.  
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*Of the poems in this volume "Adeimantus" and "The Hermit and the Faun" first appeared in THE CONTEMPORARY REVIEW, and "The Song of Snorro" in THE SPECTATOR. They are republished here by kind permission of the Editors.*

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## FANTASIES.

### **Altruism: A Legend of Old Persia.**

In the flowery land of Persia  
 Long ago, as poets tell,  
 Where three rivers met together  
 Did a happy people dwell.  
 Never did these happy people  
 Suffer sickness, plague, or dearth,  
 Living in a golden climate  
 In the fairest place on earth,  
 Living thus thro' endless summers  
 And half-summers hardly colder,  
 Growing, tho' they hardly guessed it,  
 Very gradually older.

I can very well imagine  
 These old Persian lords and ladies  
 Sitting in their pleasant gardens,  
 Dreaming, dozing, where the shade is;  
 Almond trees a mass of blossom,  
 Roses, roses, red as wine,  
 With the helmets of the tulips

Flaming in a martial line,  
While beside a marble basin,  
With a fountain gushing forth,  
Stands a red-legged crane, alighted  
From the deserts of the North.

So they lived these ancient people,  
With the happy harmless faces,  
Dreaming till the purple twilight  
In their flowery garden-places,  
Finding every year the sunshine  
And the wind a little colder,  
Growing, tho' they hardly guessed it,  
Very gradually older,  
Till at last they grew so frail  
That to their gardens they were carried,  
Very feeble and exhausted,  
Weak as babes—But still they tarried,

Lying till the purple twilight  
Wrapped in wool but hardly warm,  
Wearing shawls of costliest texture  
Lest the wind might do them harm,  
Feeling very faint sensations  
Of delight in each old breast,  
Twittering with tiny voices  
Like young swallows in a nest.  
Then the young men spoke together  
As they feasted in the taverns,  
"It is time to take our Fathers,  
We must bear them to the Caverns."

In a mountain were the Caverns,  
Fourteen leagues across the sand,  
Fourteen leagues across the desert  
In a naked golden land.  
Black and bold and bare the mountain  
Modelled into many shapes,  
Cones and pyramids and pillars,  
Beetling cliffs and jutting capes.  
And within it were the Caverns  
Tunnelled into every part,  
Some by ancient Persian devils,  
Others by a modern art.

Where the terraced lawns lay dreaming,  
Underneath a cedar-tree  
Dozed an ancient, ancient person  
Tiny as a child of three.  
Every day a gobbling negro  
To his place the old man carried;  
Very feeble and exhausted  
Did he seem—but still he tarried.  
Then Hasan, the young lord, murmured,  
As he feasted in the taverns,  
"It is time to take my Father,  
I must bear him to the Caverns."

So he took his long-maned pony,  
Her who wore the silver shoes,  
Galoped thro' the crowded highways  
Like one with no time to lose.  
Purpose in his warning outcry  
(Was he not the next of kin?)  
Till he reached his palace gateway,  
Flung the rein and fled within,  
Chose with care a wicker basket  
Very strong and deep and wide,  
Laying shawls of costliest texture  
And an eider quilt inside.

Underneath the spreading cedar,  
In an arbour newly built,  
Found Hasan his ancient person,  
Put him underneath the quilt,  
Mounted then his long-maned pony

With the basket on his arm,  
Carrying it very firmly  
Lest his father might take harm.  
Galloped thro' the crowded highway,  
Passing by the Street of Taverns,  
Fourteen leagues across the desert  
Till he came unto the Caverns.

Fastened then his long-maned pony  
To a ring-post at the mouth  
(Scores and scores of ring-posts were there  
Where the Caverns faced the South)  
Plunged within the long wide gallery  
Tunnelled 'neath the rocky roof,  
With a lantern light exploring  
All the dark which lay aloof,  
Treading swiftly, treading surely,  
With the basket on his arm,  
Carrying it very firmly  
Lest his father might take harm.

Till he came a byway unto  
Fashioned from another way,  
And a niche seen at the summit  
Of a guiding lantern ray.  
Lifted then the basket gently,  
Poised, and placed it in the niche,  
Saying "Farewell, ancient father,  
'Tis the custom" ... after which  
Bowed his head before his father  
Thrice, and swiftly turned to go,  
Knowing that it was the custom,  
Thinking it was better so.

Suddenly he heard a droning,  
Like a gnat's small plaintive lay,  
Somewhere in the dark behind him  
Where the "Ancient Persons" lay,  
Heard a little ghostly twitter  
Like a voice addressing him,  
Turned and saw his father staring  
Just above the basket rim,  
Staring at Hasan, his strong son,  
With his filmy red-rimmed eyes,  
"What's ado, Oh! ancient father?"  
Cried Hasan in great surprise.

"Son," replied the ancient person,  
"Tho' a miser is disgraced,  
Even in a wealthy household  
Monstrous is the crime of waste,  
Strong and shapely is the basket  
Much hath held and more will take;  
If you leave it in the Caverns  
Won't it be a great mistake?  
So, for once, let custom perish....  
Son, 'tis I, your father, ask it,  
Lift me out and lay me gently  
On the rock and ... take our basket."

Oh! the young lord's wild amazement  
As he heard that tiny hum;  
Turned the lantern light behind him  
Stricken with amazement dumb.  
Oh! the young lord's vast confusion  
As its meaning gave a flicker—  
Oh! the mild iconoclastic  
Staring o'er the edge of wicker.  
Staring—staring—simply staring  
With his filmy red-rimmed eyes—  
Down Hasan his father lifted  
Silent still in strange surmise.

Never faster had prince ridden  
From the place of Persian devils,  
Where its huge and inky bastions

Frowned across the golden levels;  
Nor before had faster travelled  
Scion of the equine brood  
Than that day, that day of portent,  
Galloped she the silver-shoed.  
Saw Hasan the meaning clearly  
And a prophet (so they said)  
After sunset thro' the taverns  
Loud proclaimed the custom dead.

This a legend of old Persia  
Of an earlier happier day  
Of a happy happy people—  
How they ended none can say.

### **The Enchanted Gipsy.**

"Gilda, Gilda, my ragged child,  
Where have you been,  
In the lane, the green lane, or the heather,  
My little queen?"

"Honey mother, sweet little mother,  
Oh! my old grey mummy,  
It's the blood of berries on my skirt  
Makes me look rummy."

"There is no juice on your coral lips,  
Your amber eyes are wild,  
And why do you dance like an angry jay,  
My fairy child?"

"I can tell, I can tell,  
Oh! my delicate mam,  
I dance to the tune of a blue-bell,  
Which told me what I am."

"Gilda, Gilda, my lovely child,  
Say how it spoke,  
There is nothing well in a flower's spell  
On one of our folk."

"Oh! my pet, my beautiful heart,  
Oh! my cunning mummy,  
My cousin the sun and the wind have begun,  
That's why I look rummy."

"I have known one since I have begun,  
I have known a dozen,  
But never I knew a girl was true  
Who called *them* cousin."

"Oh! my mam, my delicate mam,  
Do not scold your daughter,  
I only went to the Witch's pool  
And looked in the water."

"Oh! my dove, my beautiful elf,  
Was the water clear as heaven,  
Did you weave a crown of flowers for yourself,  
In the magic of even?"

"Oh! my mother, my honey mother,  
The water was heaven-clear,  
I wove a crown of marigolds....  
But why do you look so queer?"

"Oh! my girl, my pitiful girl,  
Good-bye to your happy hours,  
The Curse of the Pool is on you....  
Your ways are not ours."

## **The Roof of the World.**

"Ere the first blush of morning's rose  
Had reddened the eternal snows,  
I plunged the pines among,  
And came down thro' the forest sons  
In their deep-ranked battalions  
With practised steps and strong.

"Then heard I from the plateau rock  
A lowing cow and a crowing cock—  
Thin sounds in upper air.  
And far below at the valley's end  
I saw the morning smoke ascend  
That showed me men were there.

"Ho! you lads, arouse, arouse!  
He is descended to your house  
Of whom wild legend ran.  
On the roof of the world I dwelt five year,  
Go, tell your master I am here  
To be his serving-man.

"Ho! all you folk, I climbed above  
The boundaries of hate and love.  
Ho! such an one was I—  
The wind it whistled to my bone.  
I was alone, alone, alone  
With the mountains and the sky.

"It is a timeless land and still;  
The heavens slowly like a wheel  
Revolve themselves around;  
There are two rulers in that place;  
Eternity sits throned by space;  
Their law is without sound.

"Ho! you folk, such feats I did  
On the world's roof the snow amid,  
Ho! such an one as I—  
I matched the wild goat in my race,  
And underneath the long wise face  
I pulled the beard awry.

"Five years I sported undismayed,  
But suddenly I was afraid,  
Yea, fearfully amazed.  
I saw the eye of a dying hare;  
Infinity was mirrored there  
Ere it was wholly glazed.

"And this shall be my daily good,  
To draw your water, hew your wood,  
And lighten all your need;  
To do your sowing and your tilling;  
But to be bright and always willing,  
And have no other creed."

All bronzed and bearded was his face;  
He had a rapture and a grace  
From living in the wild;  
As he stared around and strangely spoke  
He lookèd not like other folk,  
But as an eager child.

## **The Poet and the Lily.**

A poet was born in a modern time,  
'Neath Saturn and his Rings,  
He was a child of the world's prime,  
Knew all beautiful things.  
He was a child of morning and mirth,  
Laughing for joy of the sun,  
His nostrils drank the scent of earth  
When rain is over and done.

A lily came from the winter's womb  
And grew in its own sweet pride,  
But the ruthless steel passed over its bloom,  
And low in the dust it died.  
And the poet's heart was filled with pain  
That a delicate thing and rare  
Should be reft of the beauty of which it was fain  
And killed by the cruel share.

So he sang of the meadows white with lambs,  
And life all young again,  
Of the colts which gallop to their dams,  
Knowing not any rein.  
He sang of the spring upon the sea,  
Hedges all white with may,  
The year in its sweet infancy,  
This our great world at play.

Of shepherds piping to their flocks  
Across the fields of thyme,  
Of sunlit fields above the rocks,  
Where the small waves lap in rhyme.  
Of glancing maids and youths their peers,  
For ever young and free,  
With faces fair, and in their ears  
Great music of the sea.

He sang the amber moon a-sail  
In an even of misty blue,  
The stars which burn, the stars which pale,  
The might which holds them true;  
The comets in another sky  
Which sweep to an unknown morn.  
He sang of some vast agony  
Or ever a world was born.

He sang a song like a twanging bow,  
His head was full of sound  
As a dark night when winds are low  
And a swell comes from the ground.  
He sang a song like a joyous bird  
In wooded places and hilly,  
While in the hearts of those that heard  
Pity grew like a lily.

### **The Tramp.**

Forth from the ill-lit tavern door  
Where he had snoozed and boozed before  
Stumbled his shambling feet.  
A candle gave a guttering light,  
And some one growled a hoarse good-night....  
The Tramp was in the street.

His boots were blistered, burst and patched,  
He had a mildewed hat, which matched  
His green, unlovely coat.  
Once, too, he caught his foot and swore,  
And, tho' the night was warm, he wore  
A muffler at his throat.

And as he went his two lips moved

As if he muttered songs he loved  
To an old, unquiet tune;  
And as he went his eyes were glazed,  
Twice, too, he paused like some one dazed  
And hiccoughed at the moon.

Thus thro' the empty ways he passed  
Until he reached the road at last  
With fields at either hand,  
And in the heavens bare and bright  
The moon stood high and shed her light  
Upon the silent land.

And lo! hard by, a lofty rick,  
No chance was there of stab or prick,  
It makes a pleasant bed.  
And so, within, he burrowed deep,  
And then upon a fragrant heap  
He laid his unclean head.

The moon was swallowed by a cloud,  
A nightingale sang sweet and loud  
From the middle of a wood;  
From its small body swelled a strain  
Which flooded all the listening plain.  
It trembled as it stood.

Upon his hay the Tramp awoke,  
The golden fountain never broke,  
The lovely sobbing strain.  
The melody of that brown bird  
Awoke a delicate, prisoned chord  
Within his sodden brain.

The brain of him who lived remote  
And dreamed strange things he never wrote  
But hoarded in his mind.  
He would not kill the dreams he loved  
For sake of little things that moved  
The passions of mankind.

Let the red torches toss and flare,  
And all the long-stemmed trumpets blare,  
Let brass beat loud on brass.  
Let the Kings ride in victory,  
Low comes the thought amidst the cry,  
"These visions shall but pass."

For, like reflections in a mirror,  
Or empty bubbles on a river,  
The striving world passed by.  
What seemed to others worth the winning  
Thro' strong desire or hate of sinning  
Brought him no energy.

The thunder muttering on the hills,  
The song of birds, the babbling rills,  
The painted flowers and stars,  
This pageantry of earth did seem  
The parcel of a timeless dream.  
He lived beyond the bars.

It was to him a vague mirage  
Or memory of a storied page  
With only that appeal;  
But oftentimes a sound or sight  
Would bring to him his own delight  
More subtle than the real.

And with his sense of entity  
Half lost, he raised a vacant eye  
Into the empyrean.  
And as he lay upon his back  
The pealing centuries rolled back....  
He saw the blue Ægean.



And thus he dreamt: "My palace home  
With minaret and marble dome  
Upon the sapphire strait.  
My garden full of nightingales,  
One singing as the other fails  
While evening groweth late.

"And from my watch-tower I behold  
Beneath a sky of molten gold  
My argosies return.  
A homeward wind is in their sails,  
Freighted are they with costly bales,  
Vast fires behind them burn.

"I have a room with shining floors  
And lofty roof and polished doors,  
Wherein I love to dine  
With two good friends at left and right,  
Whose converse is my soul's delight  
And glads my heart like wine.

"Or in my marble portico  
We sit and watch the summer glow  
And talk of love and death;  
And when the amber twilight fails  
We listen to the nightingales,  
And evening holds her breath.

"Oh! Charicles and Charmides,  
Much have I dreamt of hours like these,  
My friends I never knew—  
Whose voices and whose grave, sweet words  
Were lovelier than the songs of birds,  
And fresher than the dew.

"For Charicles has love and youth,  
And all his words are sweet with truth,  
Like a garden with the rain;  
And Charmides is mild and wise,  
But with his tear-washed, violet eyes  
Yet can he smile again.

"Perhaps I knew you, ancient lords  
Of nobler wit and finer chords—  
But this I cannot tell;  
For ever lovely things I sought  
In some strange borderland of thought,  
Content therein to dwell.

"For who could blame or who could praise  
If one should choose to pass his days  
In a phantasy of dreams,  
And, finding thus his own ideal  
In things dissevered from the real,  
Be happier than he seems?

"Ah! who could praise or who could blame,  
Tho' glimmers all my way the same,  
Like a dyke-road thro' a fen.  
Far on, far on—a ruddy spark—  
The toll-light glows adown the dark,  
And I, like other men,

"Must pay my toll and pass beyond,—  
I made no vow, I signed no bond,  
Nor lose my self-esteem,  
But pass, unknown, unloved, unlost,  
The man who knew and weighed the cost,  
The man who dared to dream.

"For what is Fame and what's a Name,  
Your cries of sorrow, wrath, and shame,  
Your Hamlets and King Lear,  
The night must cover them again  
Did they last a thousand lives of men,  
A thousand thousand years.

"The world may say that I have missed;  
Ah! no—I am an egoist  
Of subtle, fixed design.  
My dreams a garden are to me  
To which no other holds the key,  
I wish to keep them mine.

"All mine—those tender, half-thought things,  
Which flutter gossamer rainbow wings  
And hover near, near, near.  
Why should I catch and pin them down  
And lose their beauty for a crown  
Would chafe my brows to wear.

"And thus, a baser alchemist  
In some perverted plan persist  
To turn my gold to dross.  
If I turned my gold their soul were sold  
Tho' I wore a crown and cloth of gold,  
Their soul were then the loss.

"If I sat high, a crownèd king,  
With lofty brows in a royal ring,  
A lustrous diadem,  
If I wore the titles 'High, Strong, and Wise,'  
And garments stained with purple dyes,  
All jewelled at the hem

"With emeralds, rubies and jacinth stones,  
Such as great kings wear on their golden thrones,  
And a royal mantle of vair,  
And held a sceptre in my hand,  
Which showed me ruler of all the land,  
In my palace, where none might dare

"To cross my word, but all must bow  
As the courtly throng are bending now,  
And give the King his meed,  
And slaves waved forests of peacock fans  
And a cry went up like a single man's,  
'This is the King indeed.'

"For I could be King and Overlord  
In the wondrous realm of the written word,  
Am King there ... in my dreams.  
So, loving dreams, this life I choose—  
The tramp's with tattered coat and shoes,  
Yet happier than it seems.

"Thus, oh! my dreams, you grow not old,  
No process dims you, leaves you cold,  
Immortal, bright, you come,  
And if you come not, I am wise,  
I have my trusted old allies,  
Tobacco, beer, and rum."

His chin sank down upon his breast,  
And suddenly the brown bird ceased  
To pour her strain abroad.  
A sound less sweet to mortal ear  
Uprose (had one been there to hear)....  
It was the tramp who snored.

### **The Black Dwarf.**

Certain it is that of those qualities  
We are enamoured which we most do lack.  
So he, fantastic out of human guise,  
Bent, broken, bowed, small, apish, humped of back,  
Marred in the mint, perfection's contrary,  
To sweet perfection found his marred life thrall,

And—the great artist without jealousy—  
Knew beauty more than all.

Much he loved flowers and their frail loveliness,  
But if they pined thro' blight or thirsty want,  
Or spiteful wind had made his blossoms less,  
Or mouse or mole had gnawed some tender plant,  
Then seemed the edge of life all dull and blunt,  
And passion thwarted tore his twisted frame,  
And, 'neath the penthouse of the shaggy front,  
The yellow eyes flashed flame.

But most he joyed whenever country maid,  
Prizing his taste, or damsel highly born  
To judgment came, and anxiously displayed  
For him submission as for others scorn.  
Then, peering keenly from his peat-roofed home,  
Calm in his power he scanned her as he chose,  
And, if she pleased, the swart and twisted gnome  
Gave her a white, white rose.

### **To an Elephant.**

Lord of the trunk and fan-like ears,  
Wisest and mightiest next to man,  
I see thee hence a million years  
Ruling the earth with milder plan.  
Dwellers above, beneath the ground,  
Shall live contented in that time;  
No subtle growths shall e'er confound  
Their natural joy and instinct prime.

Not such as those who planned to nought  
And groped (wise fools!) beyond their ken  
Scarce knowing what they loved or sought—  
Those subtle growths, those weary men—  
Shall dwell earth's inexperienced brood  
In natural joy and instinct prime;  
But without evil, without good,  
Be each new moment, not all time.

Jungles shall grow where cities stood,  
The mighty rivers roar unbridged  
The hungry tiger seek his food,  
Save for thy bidding, privileged,  
Where (weary subtle growths) we bore  
Our burden of humanity;  
For conscious mind shall work no more  
And man himself have ceased to be.

---

## **SONGS.**

### **The Palmer's Song.**

I will fling ambition away  
Like a vain and glittering toy;  
With tristful weeping will I pray  
And wash my sin's alloy.  
I will wear the palmer's weed  
And walk in the sandal shoon.

I will walk in the sun by day  
And sleep beneath the moon.  
I will set forth as the bells toll  
And travel to the East,  
Because of a sin upon my soul  
And the chiding of a priest.

### **The Song of the Old Men.**

We are the old, old men,  
Once fierce and high-hearted in frolics,  
But now we are three score and ten  
Or upwards—mere relics  
Of the fine strong pageant of youth,  
Which time in his spite and unruth  
Has taken.  
We are dim and palsied and shaken,  
Ah! me—forsaken.

Where are the fair white maids  
With flower faces and carriage  
Straight as new-smithied blades,  
Ripe, ready for marriage?  
Now all are withered and grey,  
Their beauty has passed away,  
Ah! madness—  
They are bent like hoops with sadness  
And the world's badness.

Our voices are hoarse and drear,  
As we sit and mumble together,  
We have no good tidings to hear  
We had sooner have never  
(So we grumble together) been born,  
That are so sick and forlorn;  
Just shadows—  
But once bright fishers of shallows,  
Swift hunters of meadows.

We are the old, old men,  
We have seen and endured much trouble;  
It has turned us children again,  
And bent us double.  
Now we sit like a circle of stones,  
And hear in each others' moans  
Ill token.  
For our sweetest thoughts were broken  
Or else unspoken.

### **The Song of Snorro.**

"Oh! who can drink at the world's brink,  
Or reach the twilight star?  
It's a long sail where the winds wail,  
And the great waters are.

"Or who can say at the parting day  
That he will see once more  
His children's faces in happy places,  
His true wife at the door?"

Snorro the Viking, his thigh striking,  
Laughed in his big red beard.  
"Some are bound by sight and sound.  
While some have wished and feared.

"Their days dream as a droning stream  
Or moonlight in a wood.  
Now who can sate his love or hate,  
And the tumult of his blood?

"Then cast the die for the open sky  
When the great sun beats abroad,  
For the foam-fleck and the narrow deck,  
The life of oar and sword.

"Life and limb for the wind's hymn,  
And all the fears that be,  
The ghost-races with ghastly faces,  
The phantoms of the sea.

"Mine is the morrow," shouted Snorro,  
"I longed and have not feared."  
And his great laughter followed after  
And rumbled in his beard.

### **The Island.**

Once (was it long ago, dear?  
Oh! hark to the sighing seas.)  
We sailed to a wonderful Island  
In the golden Antipodes,  
Where the waves wore an azure mantle,  
The winds were ever at rest,  
For we'd left the Old World behind us  
A thousand leagues to the West.

We came to that wonderful Island;  
Girt by a ring of foam  
It lay in the sea like a jewel  
Under an azure dome.  
The cliffs were all gold in the sunlight,  
The strand was a floor of gold,  
So we knew we'd come to the Island  
We'd read of in tales of old.

Was it long we stayed in our Island?  
(Dear, I can never say)  
I know we walked on the mountains  
Which looked far over the bay.  
I know that we laughed for pleasure  
(Were we wise or a couple of fools?)  
As we gazed at the painted fishes  
Which swam in the shallow pools.

And night drew over our Island  
The purple pall of the skies,  
The air was heavy with fragrance  
And soft with the breath of sighs,  
And voices out of the forest,  
Voices out of the sea,  
Told the eternal secret....  
Told it to you and me.

And the stars came down from the heavens,  
And the magical tropic moon,  
To dance a measure together  
Over the still lagoon;  
And the whisper of distant forests,  
The noise of the surf in our ears,  
Seemed like the song of the ages  
Sung by the passing years.

But we said "farewell" to our Island  
Which we had discovered alone....  
The sand ... and the palms ... and the headland....  
The westering wind ... and the sun.

We said "farewell" to our Island  
(Oh! hark to the sullen rain!)  
... And I knew as it fell behind us  
We should not see it again.

For only a few may go there  
And they but once may go,  
With glamour of stars above them  
And the swinging seas below.  
But I still hear its forests whisper,  
The noise of the surf on the shore,  
In that far-off wonderful Island  
Which I shall see no more.

### **Fair Filamelle.**

Fair Filamelle is my distress  
With all her cruel backwardness.  
She will not listen to my pain,  
But turneth from me in disdain.  
That fair Filamelle,  
Her disdain is now my hell.  
She hath bewitched me with her eyes,  
As Circe did the sailor wise,  
Or Egypt did the Roman Prince,  
Two thousand years ago.  
I've little else but weeping since,  
My heart is like a stone.

If you like laughter's silver sound  
Why have you dealt me such a wound,  
If youth and beauty look askance  
At glum and heavy countenance,  
Why is it coy and cruel,  
Adding to my fire more fuel?  
Alas! Alas! it has no care,  
Free as the birds which flit in air,  
Nor heedfulness has any,  
Else were its kindness not so rare,  
Its victims then so many.

Ah! fair Filamelle, have pity on my moan,  
Else must I die alone,  
My heart is like a stone.

### **The Song of Kisses.**

I have no skill in Love's soft war,  
Nor am I bold to woo  
In the same sort that conquerors are  
When they are lovers too.  
Tho' passion thunders in my brain  
Like ocean on a beach,  
My tongue is bounden with a chain  
And manacled my speech.  
Yet, could I let one word go free  
To touch your chords with fire,  
Become the wind upon the sea  
The plectrum of the lyre,  
Then, my Althea, should we be  
Two lovers without shame,  
All things in their epitome,  
The Universe our name.  
Then should we bow to Love's command  
As the waves kiss the shore

And the rain falls upon the land  
That it may thirst no more.  
Then should we kiss, with time at bay  
As in the Ajalon valley,  
A score—two score—two hundred—nay  
We would not keep the tally—  
A hundred thousand in one bout,  
Ten myriads ere we slumbered,  
And the stars winked and all went out  
To find themselves out-numbered.

### **The Song of Odysseus.**

Out of the dark I return—  
The abode of the shades;  
The words which they said  
Were the strengthless words of the Dead,  
Meaningless, nothing importing.

Out of the dark I return  
And the House of the Dead;  
The endless regions of gloom  
Deep sepulchred in the womb  
Of Earth, the mother of all things.

Out of the dark I return,  
From the stream of the Dead;  
I slew a goat on the brink  
And they pressed around me to drink  
Their shadowy twittering legions.

Out of the dark I return,  
From the speech of the Dead;  
I asked them for counsel and word,  
They twittered like bats when they heard  
And wailed for the warm blood flowing.

Out of the dark I return;  
(Ye are baffled, Oh! Dead);  
Lost hopes, lost hearts, lost loves,  
Hollow-eyed, hollow-cheeked are your droves,  
I drew my sword and ye vanished.

Out of the dark I return  
And the dust of desire;  
My ears are still filled with the shrieks  
Of the pitiful Dead and my cheeks  
Still pale with the paleness of Hades.

Out of the dark I return  
For the day, for the deed;  
And now to Apollo, the slayer,  
I stand and utter a prayer  
Humbly, first making obeisance.

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## **STORIES IN VERSE.**

### **Adeimantus.**

The dream of Adeimantus

Who carved for a Grecian Prince  
Statues of perfect marble,  
Fairer than all things since,  
Wonderful, white, and gracious  
Like lotus flowers on a mere,  
Or phantoms born of the moonbeam,  
Beyond all praise but a tear.  
The dream of Adeimantus  
(As he lay upon his bed),  
Wonderful, white, and gracious,  
And this was the word it said.  
"Arise! oh! Adeimantus,  
The breath of the dawn blows chill,  
The stars begin to fade  
Ere the first ray strikes the sill.  
Arise! oh! Adeimantus  
For here is work to your hand,  
If the fingers fashion the dream  
As the soul can understand."  
He rose from his troubled bed  
Ere the dream had faded away,  
And he said, "I will fashion the dream  
As the potter fashions the clay."  
He said in his great heart's vanity,  
"I will fashion a wondrous thing  
To stand in a palace of onyx  
And blind the eyes of a king."  
He said in the pride of his soul  
As the birds began to sing,  
"I will surely take no rest  
Till I fashion this wondrous thing.  
I will swear an oath to eschew  
The white wine and the red,  
To eat no delicate meats  
Nor break the fair, white bread.  
I will not walk in the city  
But labour here alone  
In the dew and the dusk and the flush  
Till the vision smiles from the stone."  
Six days he wrought at the marble,  
But cunning had left his hand,  
And his fingers would not fashion  
What his soul could understand.  
Six days he fasted and travailed,  
Hard was the watch to keep,  
So the chisel fell from his fingers  
And he sank with a sob to sleep.  
But a vision came to his slumber  
Beautiful as before,  
Floating in with the moonbeam  
Gliding over the floor.  
It floated in with the moonbeam  
And stood beside his bed,  
Wonderful, white, and gracious,  
And this was the word it said.  
"Courage, oh! Adeimantus,  
I am the perfect thing  
To stand in a shrine of jasper  
And blind the eyes of a king.  
I am the strange desire,  
The glory beyond the dream,  
The passion above the song,  
The spirit-light of the gleam.  
I come to my best beloved,  
Not actual, from afar,  
Fairer than hope or thought,  
More beautiful than a star.  
Courage, oh! Adeimantus,  
Lay strength and strength to your soul.  
You shall fashion surely a part  
Tho' you may not grasp the whole."



## Pygmalion.

Once ... I seem to remember....  
Crept in the noonday heat  
A boy with a crooked shadow  
Which capered along the street.  
A boy whose shadow was mocked at  
By the children passing along,  
Straight and tall and beautiful,  
Happy with laughter and song.  
So, he envied their beauty....  
He who was crooked and brown....  
The strong youths of the mountain,  
The white girls of the town,  
Envied their happy meetings  
And the tender words they spoke  
In the shadow of the temples,  
Under the groves of oak.  
And his lonely heart was stricken  
That never his lot might be  
To walk with a maid who loved him....  
So quaint and crooked was he.

### II

Thus was my heart once stricken  
And I repined for a while,  
I but a boy in years,  
Who longed for a maiden's smile.  
Till once on a day in summer  
My soul was touched with a gleam,  
And I woke from my morbid fancies  
Like one from an evil dream,  
And knew that the gods in their wisdom  
Had made and set me apart.  
Lean, misshapen, and ugly....  
No toy for a maiden's heart.  
And I felt with a heart awakened  
That leapt in a riot of joy,  
The heart of a wise man and proud  
Not the heart of a moody boy.  
Viewing the old things anew  
With an inner wonder in each:  
The cloud ships driven thro' heaven,  
The sea rolling into the beach,  
The magic heart of the woodland,  
The loves of nymph and faun,  
The splendour of starlight nights,  
The calm inviolate dawn.

### III

Thus was my spirit quickened,  
And once on a lucky day  
I drew a bird on plaster,  
And modelled a horse in clay;  
Kneeling under a wall  
Where a shadow fell on the street,  
Eyes and mind intent  
In the midst of the noonday heat.  
Eyes and mind intent....  
And a stranger passed my way,  
... The shadow grew and lengthened  
As he stopped to watch my play.  
He looked at the little horse,  
He looked at the winging bird;  
And ere I noticed his presence  
He touched me and spoke a word:  
"Hast thou the mind and will  
As thou hast hand and sight...?  
Follow me if thou hast  
And climb ... oh! climb to the height."

### IV

So I followed him to his workshop  
And stayed there a year and a year  
Working under a master  
Who praised me and held me dear,  
Till at last a day arose  
When, taking my hand in his own,  
"You have my knowledge," he said,  
"And now you must stand alone."  
And tho' I sorrowed to leave him  
My heart was ready to sing,  
So first in praise of the gods  
I made for an offering  
(Even as does a shepherd  
His rustic altar of sods)  
Bright forms larger than human  
As mortals dream of the gods.  
Then, in my strange world-worship,  
The Tritons, Lords of the Sea,  
The creatures which haunt the woodland,  
Happy and shy and free,  
Nymphs and satyrs and fauns  
Who worship the great god Pan,  
And lastly the mighty heroes  
Who fashion the mind of man.

V

Thus thought I and thus wrought I,  
And my power grew greater still.  
I rose to the heights of passion  
And sounded the depths of will,  
Reaching out to the farthest  
Winnowing down to the last,  
Gazing into the future  
And diving into the past.  
Higher and ever higher  
Like an eagle soared my art  
And I praised the most high gods  
Who made and set me apart.  
And Prince and poet and painter  
Travelled to touch my hand,  
The minds which had toiled and suffered,  
The minds which could understand,  
Marvelling in my workshop  
At the shining forms they saw....  
The children of my spirit  
Born of a higher law.

VI

But last on a day in summer  
(An evil day it seems)  
I thought, "I will fashion a woman  
As I have seen in dreams.  
I, who never loved woman  
That breathed and spoke and moved,  
Will fashion a noble statue  
To show what I could have loved;  
A glorious naked figure  
Untouched by time or fate,  
A symbol of all that might be  
And she shall be my mate.  
Not mate of my crooked body,  
Lean, misshapen and brown,  
(No longer I feared my shadow  
But walked a prince in the town)  
But mate for my glorious spirit  
Winging thro' shimmering heights,  
On the viewless pinions of fancy  
Where none can follow its flights."  
Thus was I moved in spirit  
And wrought, a happy slave,  
Striving to make the best  
Of the gifts the high gods gave,  
Fashioning out of the marble,

—And I knew my work was good—  
The arms and the breasts and the thighs  
And the glory of womanhood.

## VII

Lo! the statue is finished.  
Look how it stands serene  
A woman with tender smile  
And proud eyes of a queen!  
Lo! the statue is perfect....  
Flower and crown of my life....  
I who never loved woman  
Could take this woman for wife....  
Her, my Galatea,  
My wonderful milk-white friend,  
Work of my hand and brain  
Linked to this noble end.

## VIII

The statue stands above me,  
Flower and crown of my art....  
But would that the gods had made me  
As others, not set me apart.  
For what, in the measure of life,  
Is work on a lower plane?  
And this the finest, brightest—  
Further I cannot attain.  
Shall I grind its beauty to fragments  
Or shatter its symmetry?—  
For I have made it in secret  
And none has seen it but me.  
My hand would falter and fail—  
Oh! ... I could not forget.  
I still should see it in dreams  
With a passion of regret.  
Or ... Shall I wait till morning  
White-winged over the land,  
Ere the fishermen tramp the beach  
And drag their boats to the sand;  
And find at last ... oh! at last  
A boon denied to me,  
Rest in the ever-restless,  
The huge, unquiet sea,  
That the brain may be freed from toil  
Which has toiled to a luckless end  
When it touched its highest powers  
And shaped my milk-white friend.

## IX

For a dream is only a dream,  
(My best and my last stands there)  
And a stone is only a stone,  
Be it carven beyond compare,  
And the veriest hind of the field  
Who sweats for his hungry brood,  
Has a deeper knowledge than I  
Of our mortal evil and good.  
Oh! gods, if ever I sought you,  
And found you, terrible lords,  
Zeus in the rattling thunder,  
Ares in din of swords;  
And thou, wise grey-eyed lady,  
Who lovest the sober mean,  
Reason and grave discourses,  
A tempered mind and serene,  
You have I duly honoured—  
Yet one have I kept apart,  
(Lean, misshapen, and ugly  
No toy for a maiden's heart).  
"Oh! foam-begotten and smiling,  
Oh, perilous child of the sea—  
Forgive—ere too late—and befriend me!  
What am I—what is life without thee?"

And his prayer went up like a vapour  
To the palace above the snows,  
Where the shining gods held revel,  
And deathless laughter arose.  
But Hupnos swiftly descended  
Like a noiseless bird of the night  
And brushed his eyes with pinions  
Downy and thick and light,  
Circled dimly about him,  
And brushed his eyes as he prayed  
Laying a drowsy mandate,  
And the watcher drooped and obeyed.

X

In at the workshop windows  
Peacefully stole the dawn;  
Tinting the marble figures  
Of wood-nymph, goddess and faun,  
Broadening in a streamer  
Which touched with a rosy glow  
The still white form of the statue,  
The sleeper kneeling below.  
... She moved as the red light touched her  
And life stirred under her hair,  
A little shiver ran over  
Her glorious limbs all bare.  
Thro' arms and breasts and thighs  
The warm blood pulsed and ran:  
And she stepped down from the pedestal—  
A woman unto a man;  
Saying in tender accents  
Of low and musical tone:  
"Oh! sleeper, wake from thy slumber  
No longer art thou alone...."

### **Alexis.**

Who slew Alexis? Some one smote  
Right thro' the white and tender throat  
(And scarce gave time for fear)  
The jewelled doll, who sprang from kings,  
With farded cheek and flashing rings,  
And left him lying here.

He sat upon a throne, pardye,  
The ancient throne of Muscovy,  
Smiling a harlot's smile,  
And gave—the painted popinjay—  
The word which no man might gainsay,  
Tossing his curls the while.

And savage warriors, steel on hips,  
Muttered between their bearded lips,  
And spat upon the floor,  
To see a thing so debonnaire  
Enthroned upon a conqueror's chair,  
And find their King half-whore.

Or in a gallery all aflare,  
Approached by some dark palace stair,  
He lay in languid mood,  
And naked women, mad with wine,  
Did cruelty and lust combine  
To stir his tainted blood.

So plunged, half woman and half devil,  
In many a foul and roaring revel,  
By some fierce craving fanned,  
Alexis, with the girlish face  
And swaying movements full of grace,

The Ruler of this Land.

So, hunted by a mind diseased,  
By those fierce orgies unappeased,  
He thirsted after new;  
And monstrous things he did (they say)  
Which never saw the light of day,  
Shared by a chosen few.

The rocks were cleft to bring him treasure,  
The mothers mourned to give him pleasure,  
The whole land writhed in pain,  
All night the secret chambers flared,  
All night the horrid deeds were dared  
Which made him thirst again.

And pampered Turks lived by his side,  
With gobbling negroes bloodshot-eyed,  
And hags with mouths impure.  
And day and night the warders tall  
Stood watching on his castle wall  
That he might dwell secure.

Strange visions did upon him throng  
With shapes confused which held him long,  
A riot in his brain.  
Unbridled lust, unbounded power  
So worked upon him in that hour....  
I think he was insane.

And I—who had no God to please,  
And nursed him crowing on my knees—  
I waited by the stair,  
And as he gave a joyous note,  
Passed this bright iron thro' his throat  
And left him lying there.

### **The King's Cloak.**

There was a King in Norrway  
Who loved a famous sport,  
He followed it in the sun and snow  
With the nobles of his Court.  
In all his kingdom mountainous  
Was none so swift as he  
(For so they said who ate his bread)  
At running on the ski.

His black heart swelled with pride  
As the acorn swells with the tree,  
And from all his kingdom mountainous  
He called the men of the ski.  
From fir-pricked crag and gloomy gorge  
Where the lonely log-huts cling,  
And till the King's word bade them cease  
They raced before the King.

So raced they down a spear-broad track,  
Where never tree did grow,  
Between the mountains and the sea  
A thousand feet below  
Till sundip in a cold pearl sky  
And a west of ageless pink  
From a withered pine to the King enthroned  
With his nobles by the brink.

There ran one with the racers  
Straight-fashioned as a sword,  
With sail-brown cheek and eyes as deep  
As water in a fiord  
And till the King's word bade them cease

None passed or touched him near,  
He leapt as frightened chamois leap  
And ran like a stricken deer.

Dusk threw a hateful shadow  
On the King's countenance  
"The guerdons of thy skill," cried he,  
"Or, boy, thy luck, perchance?  
This figured ivory drinking horn!  
This turquoise-hilted sword!  
But ... shall I see no marvel  
Ere day dips in the fiord?"

"There is not in fair Norrway  
My master on the ski  
One bolder or more skilful....  
A marvel wouldst thou see?"  
—Bold and high was the answer—  
"'Twas skill not luck, Oh! King,  
I am the swiftest.... A marvel  
Of whom the scalds shall sing."

"Oh! yonder stand the mountains  
And yonder moans the sea  
And he who leapt from the topmost crag....  
A bold man would he be.  
A bold man ... yea, a marvel  
For the grey-haired scalds to hymn...."  
Day dying touched his swarthy cheek  
With a lurid light and grim,

While he made the gloomy challenge  
And round a murmur ran,  
But ... the boy bowed low and answered,  
"Oh! King, behold the man  
The swiftest and the boldest  
In thy kingdom by the sea,  
From mountain or ... from hatred  
What man can do, dares he."

... He swept down from the mountain  
Like an eaglet on a hare  
With bent back and swinging arms  
And tossing golden hair....  
The King stood by the precipice  
(A small sea moaned and broke)  
... Looked down over the wrinkled sea  
And swiftly loosed his cloak.

... He came as an arrow is loosened....  
As a slinger slings a stone,  
Clutched (as the sun shot downwards)  
At one on the brink alone....  
The King leapt back ... the King laughed out....  
The great cloak floated free....  
There came no sound—tho' he listened long—  
From the darkened moaning sea.

### **The Knight and the Witch.**

A voice cried over the Hills  
"Follow the strange desire.  
Oh! follow, follow, follow,  
The world is on fire.  
Day burns on funeral bed  
In flame of sky and sea,  
And, black against that red,  
Is the tower where dwelleth she  
And gazeth, white foot pressed  
On bruised heaps of bloom,  
O'er the sea which cannot rest

And sounds thro' her room.  
Murmurs in her room  
Thro' a casement open wide  
The sea which is a tomb  
For mariners of pride.  
Oh! follow, follow, follow,  
Come quickly unto her,  
Her body is more sweet  
Than cassia or myrrh,  
She is whiter than the moon,  
She is stranger than death,  
Stronger than the new moon  
Which the waters draweth.  
More lovely are her words  
More lovely is she  
Than the flight of white birds  
O'er a halcyon sea.  
She took the stars for toys—  
Her magic was so strong—  
Murmurs of earth and the noise  
Of green seas for a song.  
She leant down on the sill  
And called across the sea.  
... Oh! follow, follow, follow,  
Come quickly unto me...."  
A voice cried over the Hills  
"Oh! come, I fail, I swoon,  
Pale with my love's excess,  
Paler than our pale moon.  
Oh! come, Oh! come, Oh! come,  
Before the days eclipse  
We'll meet with brimming eyes  
And kiss with quivering lips.  
Love-drunken, breast to breast,  
With half-closed eyes we'll kiss,  
And reel from bliss to pain  
From pain again to bliss.  
The sea which cannot rest  
From its undernote of doom  
(We swooning breast on breast)  
Shall murmur thro' my room.  
Shall murmur all night long  
Thro' a casement open wide.  
The sea, which is a tomb  
For mariners of pride,  
With an undernote of doom  
Shall murmur evermore  
That love is in the room  
And Death is at the door,  
That Death will bruise to dust  
Our flower-drenched passion soon  
Darker than darkest night  
Colder than our cold moon.  
So shall it ebb and flow  
Our love like those sea-tides  
For a space ... a little space—  
What matter? ... nought abides."

A voice cried over the Hills,  
"What matter? ... all things die,  
Our quivering love's excess,  
Our rose-drenched ecstasy  
As glimmering waters drawn  
By the magic of the moon,  
As the moon itself at dawn  
Our love shall vanish soon.  
So swift (my love-pale groom)  
A white bird wings its flight.  
Then find you Death's cold room,  
Darker than darkest night;  
Then find you that dark door  
(And find it all men must)  
And love there nevermore  
But crumble back to dust,  
And kiss there nevermore

In flower-drenched ecstasy;  
Too late then to implore,  
Too cold to hear a cry."

And then towards the shelving beach  
A cedar shallop drew,  
With silver prow shaped like a swan  
And sails of rainbow hue.  
Swiftly it came with a wake of foam  
And lying on its side  
Like an arrow's flight towards the Knight,  
Tho' none sat there to guide.  
And in the shallows by the shore  
It came to rest at last,  
The cordage slacked and the rainbow sail  
Flapped idly on the mast.  
And the Swan-prow with the ruby eyes  
Opened his silver beak,  
And with a musical, magic voice  
He thus began to speak.  
"Step in, step in, my gallant lad,  
Your youth shall be my fare.  
For you my mistress opes her door  
And combs her wine-dark hair.  
She swelled my sail with an eager wind  
And drove me to this beach,  
She gave strange sight to my ruby eyes  
And filled my beak with speech.

"She saw you in the magic glass  
The hour that she has might,  
As you rode across the purple heath,  
Honour and armour bright.  
Step in, step in, my lover bold  
And come to the West with me  
Where the young nymphs play in the wave and lift  
Their white arms from the sea;  
And the Tritons chase the laughing rout  
And swim by the vessel's side,  
Blowing on horns confusedly,  
Or shouting words of pride.  
You hear it now, but the time will come  
When you shall hear no more  
The ceaseless wash of a dreaming sea,  
Its ripples on the shore.  
Oh! follow, follow the sinking sun  
And the great white Evening Star,  
A magic wind shall breathe behind  
Our sail, and bear us far."

He doffed his red-plumed casque of steel,  
All flaxen was his hair,  
And he was clad from throat to heel  
In the armour princes wear,  
From throat to heel in silver mail  
Like a shining prince in a fairy-tale.

The witch Hegertha o'er him bent,  
(Ah! God, her face was fair)  
Her breath blew on him like a scent,  
She touched him with her hair.  
There was no stronger witch than this,  
And she gave the Knight her first kiss.  
And he was bound to her sword and hand,  
To do whatever she might command.

Then up to her full height she drew,  
Down poured her hair like wine,  
Her pale, proud face looked sadly through  
—A moon in a wood of pine—  
She breathed a spell in a low, sweet tone  
Which none of woman born could disown.  
And he was bound to her side till death  
By the spell just uttered above her breath.

She drew his soul forth with her eyes,



As a drinker slakes his drouth,  
A little smile played sorrowful, wise,  
About her rose-red mouth.  
She stooped down and called his soul forth,  
And left him naught but his body's earth.  
And he was bound to her evermore  
By the soul he lost and the word he swore.

For evermore and evermore  
In the chamber by the sea,  
Till death should break the spell-bound door  
And end his slavery;  
In the chamber strewn with flowers in bloom  
With a heavy scent like death,  
Echoing ever the song of doom  
Which the sad sea moaned beneath.  
For evermore and evermore  
Till life ceased in his side,  
Bound to the room and the rose-strewn floor  
And the strange, unholy bride.

And naught could save him now, when once the spell  
Had fallen on him, binding limbs and will,  
Where he sat listening to the sad sea swell,  
Amid the roses which no time could kill.  
Naught could restore lost courage to his eyes,  
The Knightly ardour that he used to feel,  
Or make his heart the seat of high emprise,  
Or nerve his hand to grasp the shining steel.  
Whether she kept him fast by her enchantment,  
Or drove him forth to roam death-pale and weeping,  
Naught could remind him what his life's fair grant meant,  
Now that his soul was in Hegertha's keeping.

### **The Dreamer.**

This is the dream of the Dreamer  
With the grave thought-sunken eyes,  
Which he dreamed between sleeping and waking,  
Between the night and the making  
Of dawn ... and he dreamed in this wise:

To the gate of the dawn came a chariot  
Which four black stallions were drawing,  
And a spirit charioteer,  
With the burning eyes of a seer,  
Held them impatiently pawing.

He mounted the floor of the chariot,  
And the Spirit drew together  
His reins, his strong grip tight'ning,  
And his thong flashed out like a lightning,  
And the horses rushed up to æther.

The Dreamer was caught into space  
With a pang as of ending or birth,  
And lo! clouds builded above him,  
And beneath him soundless and moving  
The sea of his own little earth.

They clove the walls of the clouds,  
And snorted each coal black stallion  
Nursed by the Spirit, whose hair  
Streamed out like a banner, and bare  
In the night was the moon—a medallion

And then an ice-sheathed corpse  
With ancient glaciers and snouted  
Craters of fires extinct,  
Chain on chain of them linked.  
And the Lord of the Chariot shouted

And shook out his hissing lash  
Over the backs of the four  
Till they whirled up faster and faster,  
Till the sun became vaster and vaster,  
And its flames leapt out with a roar

Of mountains, subsident, resurging,  
Innumerable, ceaseless of action,  
Years and years into space....  
And the Dreamer covered his face,  
As he rode, in his stupefaction.

They passed with a dip and a swerve,  
As a swallow skims the downs,  
Far up into the height,  
And the stars looked down from the night  
Like the lights of distant towns.

Swift is the lonely thought  
Of a sage, a mountain-dweller,  
But swifter far was their rush  
Thro' the awful cold and the hush  
Of the spaces interstellar.

They heard the approaching thunder,  
And saw the glare of a comet  
Holding its destined way  
To an undiscovered day,  
And its tresses streamed out from it.

They broke thro' other systems,  
By huger alien spheres,  
Each in its orbit travelling,  
The timeless skeins unravelling  
Of a law with no count of years

And came at last to a planet,  
Girt in a gleaming ring  
Of cloud and vapour and mist,  
Which the light of four moons kissed  
To a wonderful milk-white thing.

Then the Spirit reined in his stallions,  
And pointed in exultation  
And turned his orbèd eyes,  
Which burned with a wild surmise  
And a dreadful penetration,

On the Dreamer, who followed, and lo!  
The Heavens had changed their stations,  
And their voids were with unknown  
And greater galaxies sown  
And altered constellations.

And, beyond, a scatter of crystals,  
And, beyond, bright motes in a beam,  
And, beyond, while the Spirit probed him  
To the soul in the flesh that robed him,  
An uncountable shimmering stream.

He saw these worlds all marshalled,  
And their ways all governed for ever;  
And he felt the sight of his soul  
Shrivel up like a fire-licked scroll  
In his insupportable terror.

Then the Spirit pointed again,  
And wheeled the might of his horses  
And shouted ... and down they fell,  
As a pebble drops in a well,  
Thro' the worlds and the roar of their courses.

And the Dreamer looked, and behold!  
In a point to æons withdrawn....  
A scarce visible speck of light,  
His own sun like a mite,

And the blur of his own little dawn.

## II

Now the Dreamer, who rode by night  
In the car of the Spirit thro' space,  
Came in the blue of June morning,  
In a mood betwixt pity and scorning,  
To the populous market-place.

Afar in the infinite blue  
Hung the snow-capped mountain-ranges;  
But round him moved the press  
Of the city's business  
In kaleidoscopic changes.

For the square was all life and all colour,  
All confusion and clamour,  
As dealers showed the paces  
Of colts, untamed in the traces,  
To the rap of the auctioneer's hammer.

He saw there the dusty sheep  
Trotting blindly amidst the throng;  
The swine with quivering snouts,  
The boys who urged them with shouts,  
The hawkers of picture and song;

The brown-skinned peasants trudging  
By their slow-paced bullock wains,  
With children asprawl the load,  
And wives who scolded and rode  
With an eye to their husbands' gains;

The hooknosed Orient merchants,  
Who came in the caravans  
And bargained over the prices  
Of silks and carpets and spices,  
Pearls and feathers and fans;

The clumsy sailors in ear-rings  
From the echoing harbour beach,  
With parrots and shells for their wares,  
The light of the sun in their stares,  
The sound of the wind in their speech.

And the shrill-voiced changers of money  
Who sat with their clerks at the tables....  
And it seemed to him all no matter  
As he gazed ... like the evening chatter  
Of starlings under his gables.

## III

And lo! hard by at a pillar  
Two learned Sophists disputed,  
Taking the turn of speech  
And disciples applauded each  
Or else each other confuted

With babble and clenching of fist,  
And thrusting of face into face,  
And saying "Demus hath reason"  
Or "Lycas hath conquered. The season  
Of Demus hath passed, and his place

"Is with us no longer." And mildly  
The grave-eyed Dreamer watched them  
Shouting and seething and ranting.  
But, when they perceived him, panting  
(For a sudden impulse snatched them)

Ran up a crowd of both factions  
And cried, "Oh! Master, befriend us,  
For we all of us know thou art wisest,  
That thou speakest the truth and despisest  
No man and his need. Therefore lend us

"Thy wisdom in this our dilemma."  
And the Dreamer answered, "I hear."  
So they told him with quibble and chatter....  
And it seemed to him all no matter  
Like the croaking of frogs in a mere.

#### IV

And behold! there ran thro' the market,  
Hard by where the Dreamer stood,  
A natural, void of desire  
Save for warmth of the sun or of fire  
Or for softness abed or food.

Naught held he dearer in mind,  
Save the branched lightning veins;  
And in naught more strongly rejoiced  
Save the sound of the thunder deep-voiced  
Or the fertile flash of the rains

Or the seas climbing into the harbour;  
And so thro' the market he ran  
Happy and careless and free  
(Him no man heeded for he  
Was a boy who would ne'er be a man)

Munching the gift of a cake,  
A pilfered apple or fig,  
Or danced with his shadow awhile,  
Smiling a secret smile,  
Or twirled a hued whirligig.

And the Dreamer called to him, "Come!"  
As he skipped in the sun with his Shadow.  
And the boy came doubtful and shy  
With a timid foot and eye,  
As a young horse comes in a meadow.

And the Dreamer touched his cheek  
And murmured, "Be not afraid,"  
And the boy took heart and smiled,  
For the voice was tender and mild,  
And then half sadly it said,

"Oh! ye who have called me the Master,  
The Teller of Truth, and the Wise,  
Oh! ye who have strayed in the dark  
Give ear to my saying and mark,  
For I give you a pearl of price,

"A dark saying, and a hard saying  
To those who read it aright—  
This natural, whom ye see,  
Is wiser, Oh! blind ones, than ye,  
And thus have I learned in the night."

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## DIALOGUES.

### **The Parting of Lancelot and Guinevere.**

**(Mallory paraphrased.)**

"Be as be may," said Lancelot,  
"I go upon my quest."  
So mounted he and rode alone

Eight days into the West.  
And to a nunnery came at last  
Hard by a forest ride,  
And walking in the cloister-shades  
Was by the Queen espied.  
And, when she saw him, swooned she thrice  
And said, when speak she might,  
"Ye marvel why I make this fare?  
'Tis truly for the sight  
Of yonder knight that standeth there,  
And so must ever be;  
Wherefore I pray you swiftly go  
And call him unto me."  
And to them all said Guinevere  
When Lancelot was brought  
"Fair ladies, thro' this man and me  
Hath all this war been wrought,  
And death of the most noblest knights  
Of whom we have record.  
And thro' the love we loved is slain  
My own most noble lord.  
Wherefor, Sir Lancelot, wit thou well,  
As thou dost wish my weal,  
That I am set in such a plight  
To get my dear soul heal.  
For sinners were the Saints in Heaven  
And trust I in God's grace  
To sit that day at Christ's right hand  
And see His Blessèd Face.  
Therefore I heartily require  
And do beseech thee sore  
For all the love betwixt us was  
To see my face no more.  
But bid thee now, on God's behalf,  
That thou my side forsake,  
And to thy kingdom turn again,  
And keep thy realm from wrake.  
My heart, as well it loved thee once,  
Serveth me not arights  
To see thee, sithen is destroyed  
The flower of kings and knights.  
Therefore now get thee to thy realm  
And take to thee a wife  
And live with her in joy and bliss,  
And pray God mend my life."  
"Nay, Madam," said Sir Lancelot,  
"That shall I never do,  
For I should never be so false  
Of that I promised you.  
But unto the same destiny  
As you I will me take,  
And cast me specially to pray  
For you, for Jesu's sake.  
In you I take record of God,  
Mine earthly joy I found,  
And had you willed had taken you  
To dwell on mine own ground.  
But sithen you are thus disposed  
And will the world forsake,  
Be now ensured that I likewise  
To penance will me take,  
And so, if haply I may find  
A hermit white or grey  
Who shall receive and shrive me clean,  
While lasteth life will pray.  
Wherefore I pray you kiss me now,  
And never then no mo."  
"Nay," said the Queen, "Oh! get thee gone,  
That can I never do."  
So parted they with wondrous dole  
And swooned for their great teen  
And to her chamber scarce on live  
Her ladies bare the Queen.  
But Lancelot woke at last and went  
And took his horse from keeping,

And all that day and all that night  
Rode thro' a forest weeping.

### **The Hermit and the Faun.**

A hermit knelt before his door  
Long-bearded, bald of head,  
When a laughing faun peeped thro' the brake  
And these the words he said,  
"My mother was a water-nymph  
And in these woods I grew,  
The faun, Amyntas, is my name,  
To what name answer you?  
How came you to this lonely hut,  
Why kneel you in the dust,  
With scalp as bald as a beggar's bowl  
And beard as red as rust?  
Why make you with those knotted claws  
Your gestures strange and sad?  
The sheep-bells tinkle from the plain,  
The forest paths are glad."

"Oh! creature of the wood and wild  
You may not know my name,  
It was forgotten long ago  
For it was one of shame.  
Therefore I made a vow to dwell  
Upon this forest brink  
And take the ripened nuts for food  
And catch the rain for drink,  
To scrape wild honey from the rocks  
And make my bed on leaves  
Because of the hot sins of my youth  
Whereat my spirit grieves."

"Not such as you, Oh! ancient man,  
Our joyous Satyrs here:  
Old men are they all laughter-mad  
Who wallow in good cheer.  
Amid lush grasses soft and cool  
They make their feasting ground,  
With smilax and with bryony  
Their rosy pates are crowned.  
You see them thro' the forest trunks  
Great rolling gladsome shapes,  
Who prop themselves on skins of wine  
By purple piles of grapes.  
Their huge brown bellies quake with mirth,  
Their ancient eyes are bright,  
And there they sit and roar old tales  
Far, far into the night.  
Then tipsy with the heady juice  
Each falls into a heap,  
Till white-horned morning bids him wake  
With all the land from sleep."

"Oft lying in this lonely hut  
On panting summer nights  
I watched the stars like silver lamps  
Hung from those purple heights,  
And heard the forest-depths behind  
Fill with disquieting noise  
Like frightened cries of flying girls  
And shouts of eager boys,  
And saw white shapes go flitting past  
Like runners in a race  
And caught faint murmurs, sighs and laughs  
From all the forest place.  
And oft a distant sound of shouts  
Came with the soft night airs,

And I ... lest evil might befall  
Got swiftly to my prayers."

"And tell me now, Oh! ancient man,  
The God to whom you pray,  
These woods know none but mighty Pan  
Whom all our folk obey.  
His altar stands by yonder plane  
And there the shepherds bring,  
Toiling up from the fields below,  
Each day an offering,  
A lamb or else a yearling kid,  
A bud-horned lusty fellow,  
Great cheeses, grapes, or bursting figs,  
Or apples red and yellow,  
Or melons ripened in the sun  
A foot from end to end.  
Such gifts the shepherds bring to Pan  
That he may be their friend.

"He is our Father, Lord of all,  
From the meadow to the Pass,  
So ... pray you to a painted bird,  
Or green snake in the grass?"

"Rash Thing, beware," the Hermit cried,  
Like agates were his eyes,  
"The God I serve you do not know  
A strong God, just and wise.  
For He will purge your streams and woods,  
And smite both hip and thigh  
Your Satyrs, amorous bestial sots,  
Your careless company  
Who wanton in the thymy ways  
In which these woods abound,  
And kiss with soft empurpled mouths,  
Luxuriantly crowned.  
My soul is filled with prophecy;  
Dimly I see a bark  
Which runs by some low wooded isle;  
The night is warm and dark,  
And from a promontory rings  
A sudden bitter cry,  
It smites the lonely helmsman's ears  
And tingles in the sky.  
'Oh! Traveller, tell in every land  
These tidings strange and dread,  
Let all the peoples wail and weep,  
For Pan, great Pan, is dead.'"

Amyntas pursed his pouting lips  
And shook his curly head,  
"Farewell, old man, the forest calls;  
I like you not," he said.  
"Your flesh is dried, your ribs are lean,  
You are too lank and sere,  
Your voice is harsh, your words are grim  
And do not please mine ear.  
The great god Pan is all I need  
And all I wish to know,  
My Father Pan, the shepherd's god,  
And now, old man, I go."

Behind him closed a greening brake,  
And, after many a hail,  
He joined his gay companions  
And gambolled in a vale.

### **Love's Defiance.**

"Light of my life lie close

Oh! Love, I have found you at last;  
Let me hear your low sweet voice  
The knell of the aching past.  
The lashes lie on your cheek  
Oh! lift them and show me your eyes;  
Twin stars in a mortal face,  
They are soft, they are kind, they are wise."

"Heart of my hungry heart  
My hero whose hand is in mine  
If we fall let it be to the pit,  
For to-day we have touched the divine.  
Time has stood still to-day....  
This day which has squandered its sun.  
It has been all glory and gold  
All perfect days in this one."

"Light of my life, my love,  
My lady of dreams, lie near,  
The evening sighs thro' the pines,  
Hark! do you feel no fear?  
The light of love flashes out....  
Oh! wonder so old and so new—  
I am strong with the strength of that name,  
Dear, when I look at you."

"Heart of my beating heart,  
My friend whose forehead I kiss  
In the days which were not days,  
Weaker was I than this.  
In the years which the locust ate  
My spirit clove to the dust,  
But now—come fate—I am bold,  
I build on a higher trust."

"Light of my life, my Queen,  
Let us quarrel no more with life—  
The tears—or the final truth—  
We are victors now in the strife.  
With its purer days of joy  
With its prison anguish too,  
All myself, and the past of myself,  
My darling, worship you."

"Heart of my singing heart,  
My lover, my lord, all hail!  
Fear shall be underfoot,  
I feel that we shall not fail.  
In the shadowy land we leave  
The grim wolves raven and bark,  
But our hearts are steadfast at length  
And our faces turn from the dark."

### **The Playmates.**

"Oh! Mary, Mary, my Mary, oh!  
You looked so bonny then.  
Will you no give me your little hand,  
The sweetest hand I ken?"

"Oh! I will give you my little hand,  
I'm sweir to say you no,  
Oh! I'll now give you my hands both  
My friendship for to show."

"Oh! Mary, Mary, my lassie dear,  
The tears stand in these eyne.  
Will you no give me a kind word  
For the sake of old lang syne?"

"Oh! I will give you a kind word



Tho' I have little skill,  
For the time that we were children  
And played upon the hill."

"Oh! Mary, Mary, my lass o' gold,  
Will you no give me a kiss?  
My heart, I think, is like to break  
If you refuse me this."

"Alas! and if I must refuse  
You will not think me bad.  
That your heart should break for my sake,  
In truth it makes me sad."

"Oh! Mary, Mary, my lassie oh!  
I will be true as steel.  
Will you no give me your promised word  
For the love that I do feel?"

"Indeed—indeed—I like you well  
Aye, better than my brother,  
But I canna give you my promised word  
For—I must wait for another."

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## **DRAMAS.**

### **June and November.**

On a day, long ago, I was just a child,  
I walked with my lover, my arm in his arm,  
Half of me was sad and half with joy was wild,  
The wind was so soft and the sun was so warm.  
I walked with my lover to his pretty nonsense listening,  
And I pressed my beating heart against my lover's side;  
And tho' my voice was steady my traitor eyes were glistening,  
I showed to my lover all I wished to hide.  
His vows were so tender, his speech was so fluent,  
He whispered his sorrow if ever we must part.  
My heart in my bosom fluttered and played truant,  
So I gave it him all ... my innocent heart.  
On a green bank amidst the purple irises,  
And the shadow of a pine-wood across it was flung,  
I gave him soft words, I gave him my kisses,  
I gave him myself—myself that was so young.  
On a day, long ago, (pity to remember  
How the wind was soft, how the sun was warm,)—  
Then it was June and now it is November,  
Then I knew no evil nor thought of any harm.

### **A Foolish Tragedy.**

In the capital of Valladolid  
There lived a highborn maiden  
In a white house in a steep street  
With green doors and shutters,  
Her lips were like scarlet poppies  
And her hair like a black waterfall,  
And behind her ear she wore  
A flower of red geranium.

And her Spanish lover sighed  
And in his love he cried,  
"Heaven were nearer  
If she were dearer,  
She is the most wonderful and beautiful thing  
In the capital of Valladolid.

"If I could persuade her father,  
That fierce and rich old Councillor,  
Not to despise my suit  
But let me speak to his daughter,  
I would esteem it more  
Than the rank of a Grandee of Spain,  
A cargo of spices from Java  
Or a galleon laden with silver."

Under a brazen crucifix  
And the outstretched arms of our Saviour  
(And over her ivory shoulder  
Her black hair poured like a waterfall)  
To Mary, Mother of Heaven,  
Prayed the foolish maiden,  
"Mary, send me a lover,  
Young and tender and handsome."

It chanced on a day of festival  
In the capital of Valladolid  
That their eyes met at a crossing  
And their two souls rushed together.  
By the greed of a bought duenna  
And the interchange of love-notes  
And the help of a hempen ladder  
They arranged a meeting at midnight.

Her father, the rich old Councillor,  
Looked out of a second-floor window  
And passed his sword thro' the body  
Of one who climbed up a ladder.  
His fingers loosed the rungs  
And down he crashed to the pavement.  
And out of his handsome body  
His startled spirit departed.

And the Spanish maiden cried  
And moaned until she died,  
"My lover dead,  
My honour sped."  
So ended a foolish tragedy  
In the capital of Valladolid.

## **Alone!**

I

Alone and built of a pallid stone  
Across the levels looked her house  
And tattered plot, where nought had grown  
But withered trees which creaked their boughs.  
No fruit or blossom or petal blown  
Was there to gladden mournful eyes,  
But all was drab and monotone  
Beneath a reign of leaden skies.  
A red, red weed was all the flower,  
Which crawled serpiginous about  
The marsh, unchanged from hour to hour  
Until the evening blotted out  
The landscape which she called her own.

And, save for a ridge of bent and sand,  
Which rose between them and the sea,  
The marshes stretched on either hand,

And, ever looking, wearied she  
Of low sad purple and sombre brown  
And, where the rivulets trickled down,  
Moss-tracks of vivid green,  
And stiff grey grasses which bend and sigh,  
As the marsh wind wails and passes by,  
And quagmires in between  
The firmer ground—and over all  
She heard the curlews' dreary call  
As they piped eternally.

## II

In the days of grace, in the good days gone,  
She had set him up on a golden throne,  
The face of a god and a heart of stone,  
But now she must live alone,  
Alone, alone, alone  
In a little grey house of stone  
Which stares o'er the marshes towards the sea  
Where the great grey waves roll sullenly  
Night and day for ever and aye  
With mournful voices which seem to say  
"Alone, alone, alone."

## III

She laid her down on a sandy ledge,  
Alone,  
And buried her face amid the sedge  
And mourned till eve for a broken pledge,  
Alone,  
And the great grey sea began to moan  
Gathering noise from depths unknown  
And boomed with a hollow undertone  
"Alone, alone, alone."

## IV

Up came the night with funeral wing  
The ominous depths o'ershadowing,  
But she lay a dumb insentient thing—  
Alone with a heart of stone,  
With neither tears nor hopes nor fears  
And the booming swell like a monstrous knell  
Tolled strongly in her ears.

## V

Alone, alone, alone,  
She who had loved and known  
On other nights like this  
Strong arms about her and many a kiss  
And words of gentle tone.

Alone, alone, alone,  
A woman she had known  
Like a figure carved from stone  
Held a letter in her hand  
She scarce could understand  
Of words which hardly could be read  
"Goodbye—There is nothing to be said."

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Ah! God, if she had known.

Alone, alone, alone,  
She who had longed for love by stealth  
As a gold-mad miser longs for wealth  
Or a poet longs for fame,  
Her seared numb body had just an ache  
For a pitiful pitiless last mistake  
And the smirch upon her name.

## VI

A shrill chill wind blew out of the West  
As a young child wails for a Mother's breast,  
It broke the swell and whitened each crest  
And moaned "I come with a strange behest;  
The dead are happier. They are at rest  
Alone, alone, alone,  
Each under a graven stone,  
Where the poppies are red  
In the homes of the dead  
And their scarlet petals spill  
And the seabirds scream  
As they wheel and gleam  
And the seawinds whistle shrill.  
The dead are happy, for they are free  
They have said farewell to misery,  
Alone  
Each under a stone;  
But the hearts which mourn for a faithless friend  
Can never, never, never mend,  
And so they break for friendship's sake  
Alone, alone, alone."

## VII

The sea wind blew like a wild lament  
For loved ones dying or love mis-spent  
And still in her hollow of sand and bent  
She lay alone, alone,  
And stared out into the keening blast  
Not heeding the future or mourning the past,  
For past and future were one.

## VIII

Ah! pity her, who needed it most—  
But in the village along the coast  
Are those who tremble and moan,  
Seeming to wait alone  
For a dreadful something unknown,  
As the tempest travels gathering force  
And sobs and howls and raves and roars  
And laughs like a demon band,  
And the great waves clamber into the bay  
With voices triumphant which seem to say  
"Hurrah! Hurrah! we have found a prey  
But we seek another on land."

Ah! shivering fisherwife in your shawl,  
Perhaps they have found a prey  
Who leap and shout in the bay,  
And you will weep for the grief of it all  
For many and many a day.

## IX

All night the moon peered wan and pale  
Thro' rifts in a scudding storm-rent veil  
O'er a moving mountainous waste.  
All night did the climbers rear and roar  
And fall with a crash upon the shore,  
League on league of them coming in haste  
Till they broke and leapt no more,  
Leaping and shouting until they broke  
Upon the screaming shore.  
And the simple hardy fisherfolk  
Kept watch and slept no more,  
As the wicked wind raved down the street  
With gouts of foam and slings of sleet  
And battered at every door.

All night the tiles like chips of straw  
Were borne, and the air was filled with the roar  
Of the monstrous symphony.  
But its music lulled as the morning came  
And touched the East with a rosy flame,  
And whitened a hard clear sky,

And the tide drew out far far to the sea  
Which shouted less tumultuously,  
Tho' its voices were heard for a sign,  
As it beat upon the barrier rocks  
With the baffled rage of the Equinox  
In a spouting misty line.

X

After a night so fierce and foul  
What wonder such a day?  
The wind, which shrieked like a tortured soul  
Last night across the bay,  
Blew high and keen like a violin  
And dashed the blue with spray.

After a night so mad and wild  
An afternoon of blue,  
Of glinting, winking, glad blue waters  
And breakers only a few,  
Of light and azure undefiled  
With scarce a cloud in view.

And at the hour of evening prayer  
Came three who roamed the shore,  
The sea was older, colder, and greyer,  
And moved and murmured more.

Amid the waste of heaven and sea  
A body lay alone,  
Half in a pool and half on the knee  
Of an ancient mossy stone.

The sea had saved a poor little fool  
From life and all its harms,  
Her body lay in a lonely pool—  
Not in a lover's arms.

And on her cheek the mask of peace  
And on her lips the smile  
Of those who mourn and find release,  
Who know, not love, the vile.

### **The Wraith.**

A pale wraith stood in the dim grey dawn  
Beside his old love's bed  
Wavering like a film of lawn  
And wrang his hands and said,  
"Oh! I have come to make my prayer  
For I cannot take my rest  
When I think of the red crown I called your hair  
And the cold stone in your breast.

"Out of the eyeless hopeless dark  
The nights that are black and grey  
Never a moon or faint star-spark  
Or a lonely glimmer of day.  
Oh! my love, I have come, love,  
From the ebony gates of death  
For the sake of the red crown I called your hair  
And the jasmine of your breath."

But his voice was lost like a mouse's scream  
In a lonely empty house,  
And the woman lay in a tender dream  
Of love and orchard boughs,  
Her cheeks were flushed and twice she sighed  
As she turned upon her bed  
And she had no thought for the thing that cried  
Or the utterance of the dead.

## **The Two Murderers.**

"Yes, it was I that killed her  
I did it with this knife,  
Her that was more to me once....  
Well, just the whole of my life.  
Take me away and hide me,  
Or kill me afore I'm mad....  
It's rummy to think of me hanging  
Who was such a quiet lad.

"I met her here on the tow-path,  
Same as I used in May,  
There wasn't no moon yet, only  
The scent of the new-mown hay,  
And I says—well—I thought for a moment  
The happy times was near,  
'The light that shineth in darkness  
Is the light of your eyes, my dear.'

"Murder! a court full of lawyers....  
And justice guaranteed....  
And the judge will hang the prisoner  
'For a cowardly cruel deed.'...  
Murder!—excuse my laughing!...  
It's a kind of catch in the breath....  
'But there's words more harsh than a rope is  
And looks more bitter than death.'

"Murder! My Lud, if ever  
Their ledgers are balanced true  
Which of the pair?... Oh! I reckon  
That she killed something too.  
... Is it the scent of a woman's hair  
Or the scent of new-mown hay?...  
Don't stand there shaking and staring,  
For God's sake take me away."

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## **REFLECTIONS.**

### **The Wind and the Hills.**

We will carry our ills  
To a height of the hills,  
Lying down, lying still  
In the lap of a hill.

The wind blowing keen  
Shall again make us clean,  
Both body and spirit;  
As it passes we shall hear it.

The time is of thunder  
And fields new turned under,  
Of budding and waking;  
Of thorn-blossom flaking.

Of longing and questing;  
Of carol and nesting;  
Of white birds on the wing

Over seas blue with spring.

But you read in the pages  
Of the books of the sages,  
And save that dark curtain  
They know nothing certain,

Except that dark portal  
Which waits all things mortal—  
And conqueror or prophet  
Comprehend no more of it.

Yet the wind travels so  
That it surely must know;  
It has gone the world round  
Till it came to our ground.

And the hills, which stood fast  
Ere the first axe was cast  
And have seen so much history,  
May have fathomed the mystery.

But the hills on our borders  
Are silent old warders,  
And the winds which rejoice  
No articulate voice.

Oh! ye pure larger airs  
Ye will scatter our cares—  
Mighty bastions of ours,  
Uplift that which cowers,

For behind your grave brows  
Are a thousand strong "Nows—"  
And the wind has a "must"  
In its rude healthy gust.

How it braces and rightens  
That wind to make Titans!  
Its strenuous wooing  
Says, "Up, lads, and doing."

So leaving the high down  
Like giants we stride down;  
While the valleys before us  
Resound to our chorus.

Having been each a seer  
To whom all things were near,  
Not resenting or grieving  
But simply believing.

### **The Happy Ones.**

They awaited with head erect  
Whatever fate could befall them;  
Tried but the good to recollect,  
Cried for the truth to call them.  
To be loved by the children of other suns  
And send a message to find them,  
This is the fate of the happiest ones  
Tho' the mortar of life may grind them.  
They were like swimmers breasting the waves  
In the troughs of a stormy channel,  
They are silent now in their lonely graves,  
But the world has become the panel.  
They wore the truth like a bridal dress  
And sorrow like wedding apparel,  
Tho' the placid laughed at their foolishness  
And the cynic sneered from his barrel.  
Or like the wandering Ishmaelites,

Who found no city to dwell in,  
Whose lonely hearts ached for pleasant sights,  
Whose graves were the places they fell in,  
Rock their pillow and sand their bed,  
As the sun of the desert paints them;  
The fierce kites screaming overhead,  
And the hands of all men against them.  
But a word goes out and over the earth,  
From the silent burying-places,  
Like a gentle rain in a land of dearth,  
And lights up the tired faces.  
It brings a roof and a sweet abode  
To many a soul that is vagrant;  
Their names are blossoms along the road  
And their lives are for ever fragrant.  
We who sorrow are brothers of theirs,  
Because of their beautiful sorrows,  
Wheat will grow up among the tares,  
And young corn grow in the furrows.

### **A Question.**

Why do you prate to me  
Of deeds unjust and just,  
Moved by a story of good  
Or a monstrous tale of crimes—  
Me that can have no loves  
But star-eyed queens long dust,  
Me that can mourn no griefs  
But the tears in poets' rhymes?

### **The Earth.**

The Earth and her travail are ancient,  
Her gods have but reigned for a while—  
The moon-crowned Queen Astarte,  
The barking god of the Nile.  
Her temples were raised and builded,  
And crumbled again to the dust—  
Her worships have been and vanished—  
But the heart of the Earth is just.

### **Aspirations.**

For that Thou pointest further still  
Than that dumb hand upon the hour  
Nor givest the boon to sap the will,  
I thank Thee, wise and tender power.

For that Thou givest my soul some pride,  
Not grudging sorrow for a mate,  
For this my wild and lovely bride  
I thank Thee, just, compassionate.

For that Thou givest my soul some strength  
Of that high strength which rules the stars,  
To brave the time and wait the length,  
I bless Thy name and kiss my scars.



## Romance.

Know the decree that natures such as mine  
Must clasp the World and find her half-divine,  
Hyperion-souls which need no anodyne.  
Once more, once more ye come, ye lovely shapes,  
Voicing the magic "Ye are Gods, not Apes."  
And oh! the Glory over seas and capes.  
In memory only!—What that memory gave  
Of our young day, so brief and yet so brave,  
Will lead us half reluctant to the grave.  
Tho' it existed not—lived never—only came  
From some vast depth of dateless woe and shame  
Striving to give its high desire a name,  
The glory dies not; leaves us tired and still;  
We cannot follow, even if we will;  
The Afterglow! Ah! there—beyond the hill.

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