

# DRAMATIC LYRICS

JOHN GURDON

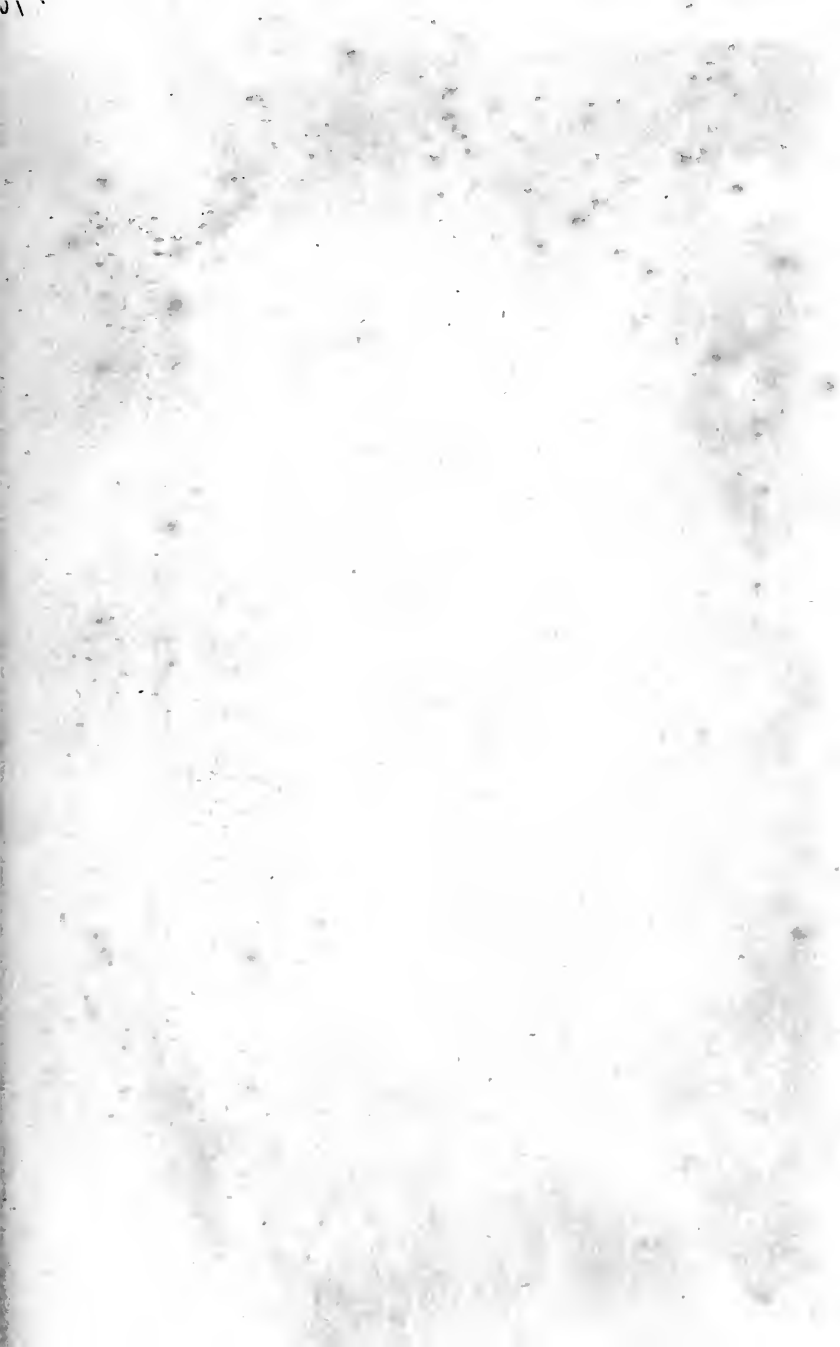
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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

## ERINNA, A TRAGEDY

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### *THE SPECTATOR.*

"This is an excellent piece of work, as full of promise as anything we have seen for some time; worthy to be ranked with Mr. Swinburne's 'Atalanta in Calydon'; to be put, that is if we may use an academical expression, in the same class, though not in the same division. . . . About the dramatic power of 'Erinna,' constructed as it is according to the strictest canon of the unities, there can be no question. The treatment, too, is austere in its abstinence from all modern, *i.e.*, non-classical treatment. . . . He shows powers which he may well use hereafter to compel the world to listen."

### *THE PILOT.*

"We have already quoted enough to show that he is a poet of remarkable promise."

### *THE SCOTSMAN.*

"The stately exaltation of the dramatic dialogue through which this fable is unfolded cannot be well exhibited in any brief citation, nor is the melodious richness of the lyrical passages any less remarkable; and the play, as a whole, is an example of cultured Hellenism in English which cannot but interest and impress every lover of refined poetry who considers it."

### *THE GLASGOW HERALD.*

"Mr. Gurdon has written a fine play. It is full of beautiful passages, which go to prove that the purest spirit of poetry is still unquenched, and is moving among us."

## DRAMATIC LYRICS





# DRAMATIC LYRICS

BY

JOHN GURDON

LONDON

ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET

1906



TO MY WIFE

IN THANK-OFFERING FOR MY LIFE'S HAPPINESS

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK OF VERSE



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# DRAMATIC LYRICS

## LIFE'S ENIGMA

SPHINX.

Who art thou flying overhead ?

CHIMÆRA.

I am the dream of lives that die.

SPHINX.

Hast thou my riddle soothly read ?

CHIMÆRA.

I am the answer, even I.

SPHINX.

Come down to earth. Art thou not mine ?

CHIMÆRA.

My wings are hope, which cannot rest.

SPHINX.

Hope fails, and fail those wings of thine.

CHIMÆRA.

Not till the East shall touch the West.

SPHINX.

I hold the secret of the Earth.

CHIMÆRA.

And I, the word which is the key.

SPHINX.

I know the bounds of death and birth.

CHIMÆRA.

And I, the soul's immensity.

SPHINX.

I am necessity and fate.

CHIMÆRA.

But I, the spirit more than these.

SPHINX.

Do homage: I alone am great.

CHIMÆRA.

My law is not necessity's.

SPHINX.

I have power upon thee at the last.

CHIMÆRA.

Thou canst not overtake me soon.

SPHINX.

Somewhere my clutch shall hold thee fast.

CHIMÆRA.

East of the sun, West of the moon.

SPHINX.

O futile dream, there shall of thee  
Nothing be found when time is done.

CHIMÆRA.

I shall endure, when thou wilt be  
Cold dust beneath an ashen sun.  
And the new covenant begun.



## AN EVOCATION

SHINE again, O thou portent of splendour,  
 Diadumene, star of the morning.  
 Be the fillet thy temples adorning  
 Bound anew for one victory the more.  
 Take thy triumph, for, fain to surrender,  
 Our hearts be. Ah, rise to relieve us  
 From the worship of idols more grievous  
 Than Moloch of yore.

Of all dreams that inspired us and guided,  
 The dull demon of gain has bereft us;  
 Not the throb of a passion is left us,  
 Not a pulse, not an impulse to stir.  
 The fine gold of the soul is divided  
 Between Mammon and God, for we palter  
 With both, laying doles on each altar  
 Of incense and myrrh.

Ah, would we might waken from slumber,  
 From the dream that we stifle and bleed in,  
 And, as Eve in the Garden of Eden,  
 Behold thee take shape with the dawn.  
 From cares and conventions that cumber  
 Broken loose, and the prison enchanted  
 Of sin, live serene and undaunted,  
 Of freedom re-born !

From the labour that mars and debases  
 The body and soul of the toiler,  
 Subduing all Nature to soil her,  
 All flesh but to slay or enslave ;  
 From the greed that begrimes and disgraces  
 The green earth to a noisome Gehenna  
 Fire-defaced as the meadows of Enna,  
 Oh, heal us and save !

What name for thy sake shall be spoken  
 With praise between nation and nation ?  
 What blood shall be spilt for libation ?  
 What cities spent glorious in fire ?  
 By what shock shall our bondage be broken ?  
 Will an earthquake's upheaval from under  
 Bare in ruin to daylight, I wonder,  
 Our epoch of mire ?

None replies. When thy planet ascendant  
 Rides over the mists of the morning,  
 Who shall say what the day that is dawning  
 May date till all ages be dead ?  
 Only this : that once more a resplendent  
 Renown will bejewel the tissue  
 Brocaded of purples that issue  
 From hearts that have bled.

For behind and before thee, gigantic,  
 Stalk ever the Scourgers of mortals,

Grim Furies who garnish the portals  
 Of death with the trophies of crime.  
 As a star of the seething Atlantic  
 Soars away from the welter of waters,  
 Thy fame from oppressions and slaughters  
 Emerges sublime.

On that darkness more cheerless and colder  
 Than midnight, the nadir of ages,  
 When the prophets are dumb and the sages  
 Are blind, and man's spirit astray  
 Cowers down by the watch-fires that smoulder  
 On battle-fields fought and forsaken,  
 Thou, dawn-bearer, risest to waken  
 Glad strife with the day.

O Miriam, thy pitiless pæan  
 Rises yet o'er thine enemies sunken  
 As lead in the waters ; though drunken  
 With vengeance, implacable still.  
 Like a sphinx, in the desert Chaldæan  
 Gazing out in the silence for ever,  
 Semiramis sits by the river  
 She warped to her will.

Fair daughter of Leda, what charm is  
 In beauty so potent, that stronger  
 Than passion pulsating no longer,  
 It vanquished the hate of the old ?

In her cause would the people in armies  
 Assemble, or cities be taken ?  
 By what wrong their allegiance be shaken  
 To traffic and gold ?

Livid masks of cadaverous pallor,  
 Without love, without hope, or believing,  
 Too crass for rejoicing or grieving,  
 More callous than granite of flags,  
 Souls dead in corruption and squalor,  
 What fiend would accept you in payment  
 For the garbage ye feed on, your raiment  
 Of pestilent rags ?

Around us, a river polluted,  
 Air tainted, the vault of a cavern !  
 What wonder, from tavern to tavern  
 Men reel on their path to the grave,  
 Drink-sodden, diseased, and embruted ?  
 Ah, Crowned One, be strong to deliver,  
 Though blood must be spilt as a river  
 To cleanse us and save.

## LES ILLUSIONS PERDUES

(From a Picture.)

## I.

WHY dost thou sit alone,  
 Poet, with laurelled head  
 Bowed, and thy listless hand  
 Loosing the lyre ?  
 " I have plucked the mystic cone  
 From Comus' wand," he said,  
 " And from his falling brand  
 Stamped out the fire."

Who are these glorious  
 That throng yon gilded bark  
 With flags that flaunt and blow,  
 Streaming to sea ?  
 Joy shines upon their brows.  
 He answered, " Mine are dark,  
 For these are dreams that go,  
 Forsaking me."

One stands upon the stem,  
 His face is like a flame,  
 The light of the setting sun  
 Flames in his hair.

“ Ah, tardy diadem !  
Behold ambition’s aim,  
An hour-brief chaplet spun  
Of fire and air.”

Who like a nesting dove  
Snowy and soft reclines  
Cradled in Youth’s embrace,  
Radiant with bliss ?  
“ My heart’s warm dream of love.  
It is my soul that shines  
Out of her eyes and face  
Now turned to his.”

And one by one with cold  
Calm voice their names he told,  
Friendship and Faith,  
Pleasure, Desire, and Pride :  
When sudden by his side  
I saw one stand, and cried :—  
“ Thy name ? ” My name is Death.

## II.

Look up, I cried, look up ;  
The ocean, like a cup  
Of sparkling wine,  
Froths o’er his golden rim.  
“ I see gray waters dim,  
And scurf of brine.”

Nay, but look forth ; behold  
The intolerable gold  
Blaze of the setting sun.  
In ruby and chrysoprase,  
Like one great opal blaze  
The clouds. "Nor sun nor cloud  
I see, but night begun  
To weave my shroud."

He ceased. The twain were gone,  
And gone the magic bark ;  
It vanished like a spark.  
The wind blew cold ;  
Pale grew the sea and sky :  
I waited silently  
There in the dusk alone.  
I too was old.

## A BAHAMIAN NIGHT

SAY why in the moonshine shows your face so pale,  
 O my love, my love ?

It is white as the perfumed stars of the jasmin trail  
 Swaying above,

Or out in the Narrows those petals of pearly sail.

“ It is pale with passion and wan with love’s delight  
 And love’s unrest.

Ah, what shall I do with my life when your love takes  
 flight

For a balmier breast,  
 For a rosier cheek than the cheek you find so white ? ”

Listen, sweet, to the whispering sigh of the cool sea  
 breeze

That goes sifting through  
 The winnowing slats aslant of the jalousies :—

“ I have flown to you,  
 And I die as I kiss your bosom and clasp your knees.”

Will the wind go wooing another ? His flight is  
 flown,

His wings are furled.  
 And Love flies free as the wind to one heart alone  
 In all the world,

And then—he must tarry for ever, dear heart, my  
 own.



" Is yon still river of milky light a dream  
     Or a road by day?  
 White ruffle the palms and vanish like puffs of steam.  
     In silvery gray  
 The shingled roofs of the shadowy houses gleam.

" White flashes the diamond spray over Silver Cay  
     Like a storm of stars,  
 And white the tide sets sobbing away to sea  
     On the coral bars,  
 And white clouds climb to the zenith and sink to lee.

" In the spell-wind blowing across the world to-night  
     The world's desire  
 As an ambient aura quickens, a lambent light  
     Of argent fire.  
 And I—do you wonder, love, that my cheeks are  
     white? "

## ANTIGONE

PERCHANCE her faith seems strange, which could rely  
On spilt libation and on sprinkled dust,  
Which in such forms had so supreme a trust  
That for their meet observance she could die,  
Leaving her lover and the sunlit sky  
And the old sweet life, her birthright, for a crust  
Of cheerless duty sold, a sop to thrust  
Between the jaws of blind brute destiny.

Ah then, dear love, should not our love be true ?  
*She* died to sprinkle on her brother dead  
Those costly grains of unavailing sand :  
The sands of all my days to come, if few  
Or many, as the gods may will, are shed  
And heaped within the hollow of your hand.

## PENUMBRA

ONCE more the gray-eyed goddess of the dawn  
Dethrones the night,  
Whom fleeting stars abandon, far withdrawn  
To left and right  
Before the fiery onset of the morn.

Till the dawn break and shadows flee away,  
How long, how long !  
Yet, goddess of the tender eyes and gray,  
Like flesh from thong  
I flinch before the clarities of day.

Ah, linger, dearest ; let thy cloudy hair  
Shadow my face.  
Light as a moth wing lay thy cool lips where  
Their dew's erase  
The last script on the palimpsest of care.

## THE NAIAD

FAR off, she hears a roar  
Of rollers on the shore,  
Then turns to watch once more  
    The sallows quiver,  
As the warm wind at ease  
Saunters among the trees,  
Drops, and her face she sees  
    In the smooth river.

Pliant and placid all,  
With swaying rise and fall  
Along the lapping wall  
    The water wanders :  
Sweeping with even pace  
Through the frail lines that trace  
The semblance of her face  
    As there she ponders.

What are her thoughts ? Who knows  
The reverie of the rose ?  
The long sweet swooning doze  
    Of fruited summer ?

As the blue river haze  
Drifts down the water ways,  
Dreams she of winter days  
And mists to numb her ?

Daughter of Joy, for thee  
Winter shall never be ;  
Frost shall not strip the tree  
Nor bind the river.  
While the years come and go,  
Still shall thy fountain flow  
And the warm zephyr blow,  
The sallows shiver.

## IN PROFUNDIS

IRON-STRUNG should the harp be to sing to thee ;  
 Iron-woven the chaplet should be.  
 Thou who scornest all gifts that men bring to thee  
 Wilt accept no peace-offering from me.  
 This is none, but a psalm of thanksgiving  
 That sweeter than life to the living  
 Is death to thy dead, to thy chosen, who rest from  
     their labours, O Sea.

In thy blue gulfs and the shallower  
 Wastes where the waters are green,  
 Thou art the grave and the hallower,  
 Thou, of their burial unseen.  
 Thy winds are their mourners ; their dirges  
 Evermore in thy thundering surges  
 Resound ; they are robed in thy splendour and palled  
     in thy purple, O Queen.

Over them sleeping and under them,  
 Blackness of darkness is shed.  
 No storm from their haven can sunder them.  
 As over iron the red

Rust spreads slow, and devours  
 Its shape, the invisible showers  
 Of sand shaken down from the feet of the waves cover  
     body and head.

Up in the sunlight, thy surfaces  
 Darken and lighten and gleam,  
 Fitful and brief as the purposes  
 Saved from the wrecks of a dream.  
 But thy depths know not morn nor the even,  
 Nor azure, nor cloudier heaven ;  
 And flowerless and fadeless dim waver thy gardens in  
     tideway and stream.

Far out where the ocean lies hollower,  
 Far under the fathomless brine,  
 Let me hide from the Furies that follow her  
 My soul in recesses of thine.  
 Where the daylight is driven asunder,  
 Broken up by the darkness from under,  
 The wine of their wrath slowly fades through the  
     water like crimson of wine.

Subject or slave is there none to them  
 There, nor dominion to stand.  
 Evil and just are as one to them,  
 Passed from the reach of their hand.  
 Deep calleth to deep in their falling  
 Down lightless abysses appalling :  
 " See thou yield not our suppliants for prey to the gods  
     of their terror on land ! "

Open thy chasms, and swallow them  
Into the mazes of night,  
Whither their works shall not follow them,  
Anguish nor glory requite.  
As a froth flake that flutters and hisses,  
Flying loose o'er unsounded abysses,  
So passes man's life and so perish the labours he  
wrought in the light.



## IMMORTAL SPRING

WORDS of welcome more blithely spoken  
 Greet you, perchance, on this Easter morn.  
 These are but halting, a wistful token  
 Of wishes your heart is too kind to scorn.  
 For if the sound of them jar and jangle  
 Harsh, unmusical, cracked in chime,  
 The thought runs true through the rough-spun tangle  
 Of heedless rhyme.

Almost April is past and over,  
 Primrose month of the rainbow showers.  
 In northern nooks of the wild-wood cover  
 Late Lent-lilies yield up their flowers.  
 The sun and the swallow have come together ;  
 The north wind hushes and hastes away ;  
 And lolls in the lap of the silky weather,  
 The lengthening day.

Ah that the spring may have no abiding !  
 Ah that the summer must fade and fall !  
 Ah that so few are the days dividing  
 The weeks from winter, the end from all !

Alas for the sun and the wheeling swallow,  
The love that shone, and the thought that flew  
Like a sylph of the morn through the sunlit hollow  
Of silvery blue !

Yet in your bosom the spring will linger ;  
Still in your heart will the sun survive.  
And as to the touch of your elfin finger  
The spirit of music awakes alive,  
My cold heart warms with the old romances,  
And my blood leaps up and my thoughts take wing  
At the smile from your lips to your eyes that dances,  
Immortal Spring.

## PHYLLIS AND DEMOPHOÖN

O PHYLLIS, dryad of the almond tree  
 Whose latticed branches spread and intertwine  
 Their rosy mesh in the blue hyaline,  
 Caging the light-winged zephyrs wild and free,  
 Dost those remember thee  
 Of the old time fled and the lone winter days,  
 When the bleak headland and the weedy ways  
 Beheld thy weary vigil while the wind  
 Mingled his wail with the sea-birds' clamouring?  
 O glowing jewel between the eyes of Spring,  
 How shouldst thou call to mind  
 The melancholy coast, the waves that roar,  
 Dark as cleft flint, along the Thracian shore?

Through white sea mist the sun rose up like blood,  
 And like a formless floating sun she shone,  
 The red-prowed warship of Demophoön,  
 Oaring her way over the oily flood.  
 High on the poop he stood,  
 Steering through breaches in the crumbling wall  
 Of rollers overarching to their fall  
 Where the bar boomed across the estuary.  
 The yellow waters and the sedgy bank  
 Rocked to the wash of the long oars in rank,

With easier dip that ply,  
 As the tired rowers on the long thwarts wave-wet  
 Dashed from their peering eyes the blinding sweat.

The peaks of Rhodope were white with snow,  
 But whiter shone her bosom where she stood,  
 Phyllis the queen, in that sad autumn wood  
 With him she loved, who came and now must go.  
 Ah, well the grief I know !  
 Like flakes of beaten copper the leaves fell ;  
 The wizened bracken in moist glade and dell  
 Burned with dull fire ; the drizzle of the dew  
 Dripped from black boughs upon her upturned face  
 Pale as a wind-flower in that sad place ;  
 And then her tears anew  
 Wetted her cheek : she shivered in the chill,  
 Standing beside him on the rain-soaked hill.

Was there no chief with panoply of gold  
 In Thrace, O queen, goodlier to gaze upon  
 Than this swart stranger, this Demophoön,  
 Whose hair was streaked with grey, and face grown  
     old  
 In leaguer of the hold,  
 God-built and god-defended, of Troy town ?  
 His helmet, dinted thin and tarnished brown,  
 Showed worn and fragile as a withered leaf.  
 The chasing on sword scabbard and sword hilt  
 Effaced, and dulled the crests of horsehair gilt.

Was there no lordlier chief ?  
 What if there were ; he was thy chosen one,  
 And who could stand beside him 'neath the sun ?

Ah, sweet is love ; but bitter is the pain  
 He leaves behind as for remembrance sake :  
 And as with fire of frost, her heart did ache  
 When her sad eyes, bedimmed with tears and rain,  
 Oft watched the hurricane  
 Drive rain and spray, in blind confusion blent  
 With tattered cloud, across the firmament.  
 Or when the winds were frozen into calm  
 Like ice-bound rivers silent and congealed  
 Which cease the music of their murmurous psalm  
 'Twixt snowy field and field,  
 She saw the shape of sorrow unto death  
 Pass phantomwise upon her vaporous breath.

A waft of death against thee sent, O queen,  
 Whose love, not life, outwore the winter's reign,  
 For never in sweet familiar wise again  
 Should the new time be as the old time had been.  
 Before the woods were green,  
 Across an almond bough her wild hands drew  
 Her linen girdle fast, and desperate threw  
 The woven noose over her shapely head ;  
 While swift the pine-wrought well-oared warship  
     came,  
 Red and refulgent as a wrathful flame.

Swift! But more swiftly sped  
 The indignant shade before the blast that drives  
 The dizzy flocks of disembodied lives.

He saw her hair blown loose upon the wind,  
 And the tense ivory of her bloodless feet.  
 Though various Iris were the paraclete,  
 'Twere all too late to aid her, or re-bind  
 The threads untwined  
 From the rent woof of life's unravelled edge.  
 As well restrain Chimæra with a hedge  
 Of osier withes as seek to fence off death :  
 Much less, then, shall one wrest his prey from him,  
 Which like a lion crouched limb on limb,  
 Holding, he sundereth  
 From the affrighted herd afar that run  
 With antlers pressed against their shoulders dun.

The russet trunk in grief's abandonment  
 He clasped with vain embraces ; the rough bark  
 Dented and chafed his chin with crimson mark  
 Like some god-printed sign of punishment.  
 And still his eyes were bent  
 On that dead form which, even as he gazed,  
 Seemed to withdraw before his vision dazed.  
 Then as the lamps of the Eleusinian shrine  
 Put forth their fire buds when the hierophant  
 Touches the wicks while swells the sacred chaunt,

So rosy blossoms shine  
Starlike along the boughs' bare tracery  
Black-fretted on the chill pale turquoise sky.

Until within his circling arms compressed  
He felt the rigid wood grow soft and warm ;  
And, gliding through the cloven bark, her form  
Slipped, and he found her folded to his breast,  
His Phyllis manifest,—  
A woman still. Yet that had touched the clay  
Which thrilled the veins of sweet Ambrosia  
With the strong ichor of divinity.  
And still with spring returning she returns,  
And still her answering passion breathes and burns ;  
Her glorious canopy  
Drapes with new splendour all her boughs above,  
Fit tent for ageless youth and everlasting love.

## ERYTHEIA

IN the days of long ago,  
Ere the walls of Sybaris  
Gleamed in marble white as snow  
Through the rose-trails' crimson glow,  
Italy was not; for this  
Called they Erytheia then,  
Sunset's dim dominion fair,  
Land of gods and godlike men,  
Land of hushed and purple air.  
Here the mighty shades reclined  
In lush meadows where the Hours  
Mothlike flit, nor rain nor wind  
Wakes the drowsy flowers.

Till the Arcadian sea-lost band  
Crossed the unsailed Ionian sea;  
Landed on the lovely strand,  
But they found no sunset land,  
No happy golden Arcady.  
Ghost or god was none to greet;  
Amaranth nor asphodel  
Flecked the sward beneath their feet,  
Nor in calm unchangeable



Brooded all the winds alway  
 Under skies of reddening gold :  
 Shower with shine, and night with day  
 Changed, and heat with cold.

So, the Islands of the Blest  
 Lie, they said, beyond the seas  
 Of the illimitable West  
 Where the swirling tides are pressed  
 Through the Gates of Heracles.  
 Utmost Gades, where the stream  
 Sweeps away to gulfs that yawn  
 Down the shapeless realms of dream  
 'Twixt the sunset and the dawn,  
 Almost holds the peaks in sight—  
 Seen against the setting sun  
 Through the falling veils of night  
 Fading, dulled and dun.

Then the Northman and the Dane,  
 Driven before the tempest's blast,  
 Swept through spray and splintering rain  
 O'er the chill, grey, western main,  
 Till their eyes beheld at last  
 When the gale was spent, and all  
 Fringed with fire the rollers sped  
 Westward through the evenfall,  
 Faery cliffs of dusky red

Glow like embers, till the wrack,  
Rolling, dimmed the enchanted shine,  
And the dawn showed blank and black  
All the far sea line.

Beckoning dreams, ye still beguile  
Hearts as fain as those of old.  
Looms St. Brandan's faery isle,  
And Hesperia's gardens smile  
With their wealth of guarded gold.  
Who can say we seek no more  
Than the daylight things that are ?  
Who but hopes a happier shore  
Underneath the evening star ?  
One by one, or soon or late,  
We shall find the lonely way  
To the Islands Fortunate  
At the close of day.

## NIRVANA

I saw a Naiad sleeping,  
Couched in her lucid river ;  
O'er breast and flank, as o'er a bank  
The aspen shadows quiver,  
The restless ripples shining  
Went wavering to and fro ;  
And rustling sedge was sweeping  
Over her limbs reclining  
Along the current's flow  
That clasped her as she sank.

So might I rest for ever  
With music flowing o'er me  
In liquid streams, and rainbow gleams  
Of beauty float before me.  
In veil of silvery showers  
The old tears should pearly shine,  
And life's fond endeavour  
Be one deep anodyne  
To lull the languid hours,  
To drown my soul in dreams.

Ah me, to close in slumber  
The weary lids and aching !

To weave a veil of darkness pale  
 Between the morning breaking  
 And eyes that rest from roving ;  
 Such veil of dimmest dawn  
 Night, suppliant, draws to cumber  
 The rising of the morn  
 With lingering hands and loving  
 That slowly droop and fail.

For all things fade and, fading,  
 Bereave the soul of gladness.  
 So soon, so soon life's mellow noon  
 Declines to vesper sadness.  
 Through autumn years we follow  
 Desire with shuffling feet ;  
 In woe's black waters wading  
 'Neath age's mortal sleet,  
 Slow-falling down the hollow  
 By that chill torrent hewn.

But yet—ah, love, to leave you  
 Were bitterer than searing  
 With red-hot steel the eyes that feel  
 The torment slowly nearing  
 Till sight in pain is darkened.  
 Yet, bitterer still, it were  
 To watch the years bereave you  
 Of soul and body fair,  
 And break the song we hearkened,  
 And hush the heart's appeal.

I crave no crown of glory,  
Who seek but cease from craving.  
Is one thing worth, on all the earth,  
The losing or the saving?  
We are born, we die, and after  
Oblivion scattereth  
Her poppy o'er the story  
Of birth and love and death,  
The life that is but laughter  
Of some encyclic mirth.

## THE MOON-SPELL

## THE MOON.

WHY follow ye after my gliding car,  
Spirits of heaven who, star by star,  
Like sparks rise out of the ocean stream ?

## THE STARS.

As air bells, clinging to weeds asway,  
Float up to be kissed by the wind away,  
So we, to be lost in thy wavering dream.

## THE MOON.

Far under me running, the rumour goes  
Of a tide that steadily swells and flows  
To the surge and the heave of a labouring sea.

## THE SEA.

The sunken sills of my sea-gates know  
The way that the wheels of thy white car go  
By the throng of the waters that seek to thee.

## THE MOON.

Art thou weary of flying from dome to dome  
Of cloudscape summits more white than foam  
Through violet deeps of the night, O wind ?

## THE WIND.

The flames burn dim in the spheral shells,  
 And the floods sink down in the ocean wells,  
 And my wings fail me and fall behind.

## THE STARS.

Had we but the wind's wings, fleet and free!—

## THE WIND.

Were I clothed with the strength of the thundering  
 sea!—

## THE SEA.

Could I soar like a bubble of silver fire!—

## STARS, WIND, AND SEA.

Ah, then we would find thee and find sweet rest,  
 And, frozen to sleep on thy swan-white breast,  
 The long love perish, the pain expire.

## DANSE MACABRE

PLAY, recorders, play till all  
 Man's unseemly masque be done.  
 Till through heaven the moon and sun  
 Are following earth's funeral,  
 Let your tune  
 Wail and warble, pine and croon.

Let the clacking castanet  
 Chatter in its bony glee.  
 On the marge of memory  
 Love will set, and love's regret  
 Late or soon  
 Dwindle as the waning moon.

Say, thou futile fragile urn:  
 In what underworld obscure  
 Doth thy graven grief endure,  
 Doth thy carven flambeau burn?  
 Grim buffoon,  
 Grinning 'mong the skulls at noon,

Void of reverence, void of ruth  
 Gibbeting in face of day  
 Piteous horrors of decay,  
 Thou art gibbering the truth  
 Fools impugn  
 In lettered brass and marble hewn.



Verily, the like event  
Happeneth to all : we pass  
From flesh to dust, from dust to grass,  
From grass to flesh, their nourishment  
Who'll wear our shoon  
And dance the self-same rigadoon.

## PARTHENOPE

ON the flowing river of flower-sweet wind  
Dreamily pillowed I float, and sing  
A murmurous song like the tide in spring  
When the farthest ripple expires in foam  
By the last white shell on the bleaching sand,  
The tune none ever shall understand  
Till the ocean rest and the wind blow home,  
And youth grow cold and the sun grow blind.

Follow me, follow me over the sea  
From the weary toil of the sail and oar  
To the land of promise, yon shimmering shore.  
She is there, thy vision unveiled in swoon  
By the foam-born goddess, who paused to press  
With palm more soft than my song's caress  
Thine eyelids heavy with sleep one noon.  
For joy dwells whither the shy dreams flee.

One swift plunge in the dimpling blue,  
Then away on the croup of the galloping surge!  
Away to and up to and over the verge  
Of the reef that roars in a whirl of white,  
As the rollers hurtle and rear and fall  
In mist and glitter across her wall.  
Thou shalt win to the haven of Heart's Delight,  
The Isle of Passion where love comes true.

Where the waves die out in a seething sheet  
 That rocks to the sway of the under-swell,  
 An eddy as smooth as the lip of a shell  
 Will carry thee shoreward and lay thee down  
 On the bents at the feet of her standing there,  
 The fires of the West in her tawny hair.  
 Like a storm-plucked tassel of seaweed brown  
 Cast by the wash of the wave at her feet.

Then she will kiss thee, bending over thee,  
 Cheeks aflush, and her eyes aflame ;  
 And chiding a little with gentle blame,  
 Thy head she will pillow 'tween arm and side,  
 Saying : " Why hast thou waited so long, so long,  
 To follow the lilt of the Siren song  
 And come to me ? " So will she softly chide,  
 While her sighs surround and her tresses cover thee.

Till thy cold veins quicken with green sea-fire,  
 And under thee meeting her white arms twine,  
 And thou shalt be hers and her charms be thine.  
 Till thy pulses dwindle as darkness grows,  
 And closelier ever her scarlet lips  
 Fasten, and slowly her hot breath strips,  
 Petal by petal, life's rifled rose,  
 And thou die on the heart of thy heart's desire.

## MAD ALOÏS

FAIR is thy face to see,  
 Mother, my Normandy,  
 Since his sad eyes on me  
 Gaze out from thine.  
 Thy winds blow, and he speaks,  
 His breath against my cheeks.  
 I hear him now ! He seeks  
 To give the sign !

Through that gray dawn in spring  
 I heard the throstle sing ;  
 Then one long quivering  
 Clear note I heard.  
 Out of the dusk and dew  
 It rose, the call I knew,  
 More piercing sweet, more true  
 Than any bird.

Swift from my couch I rose—  
 How his breath comes and goes !—  
 And through the orchard close  
 Stole to the tryst.  
 Fleet though I sped, more fleet  
 Death strode before my feet.  
 Death stole away my sweet  
 Ere we had kissed.

For as my face to his  
 Drew slowly, even, I wis,  
 As when the wine-cup is  
 Filled to the brim,  
 One lifts it slow to sip  
 Once with unhasty lip  
 Lest the least drop should slip  
 Over the rim,

Sudden a sword-flash played  
 Before mine eyes, the blade,  
 Down driven, slashed and frayed  
 My girdle band.  
 Thrust through his heart, it came.  
 Father of woe and shame,  
 Salt in thy sevenfold flame  
 The accurséd hand !

"Love," moaned he, "I am slain."  
 Then silence: and again  
 I heard the throstle's strain  
 Shrill overhead.  
 Then they, my brethren, they  
 Spurning him where he lay,  
 Stood up and praised the day  
 That he was dead.

"Get hence! Go leave," I cried,  
 "The bridegroom with the bride.  
 Though it be morningtide,  
 Why should we rise?"

Shall we not take our fill  
 Of love? " Ah, wind of ill,  
 That on my brow breath'st chill  
 His dying sighs!

Our marriage bed was set—  
 Wind-flowers, the coverlet—  
 'Neath apple boughs that met  
 Encanopied.  
 Soft as a silent rain,  
 Their blossom showered amain,  
 White with a rosy stain  
 On either side.

Slumbering the live-long day,  
 Within my arms he lay.  
 I had no heart, I say,  
 To bid him wake.  
 I had no care to move  
 That I might rouse my love,  
 Lest the dear heart they clove,  
 Beating, should break.

I know not if I slept,  
 But o'er me darkness crept,  
 And in the dark I wept  
 Until the light.  
 On cold frost-hardened ground  
 No couch of love I found,  
 Only a narrow mound  
 With rime bedight.

What were the words they said ?  
 They beat within my head—  
 “Long dead, long dead, long dead  
 And buried deep !”  
 Dead ? ’Tis not he, but I ;  
 For, look, mine eyes are dry,  
 Because the dead may sigh,  
 But cannot weep.

Fools, though ye laid him there,  
 My love is everywhere ;  
 Out of the earth and air  
 He calls to me.  
 Fools, did ye think to bind  
 Love ? Can ye net the wind,  
 Or hath your hand confined  
 The unsounded sea ?

He fills the summer’s dream ;  
 His are the locks that seem  
 The charlock’s yellow gleam  
 Across the meads.  
 His eyes are cornflowers blue,  
 The poppies’ sanguine hue  
 Shows the wound soaked through  
 That bleeds and bleeds.

I to the North and South  
 Lift up my kissing mouth ;  
 Closer than dearth to drouth,  
 I cleave to him.

Unto the East and West  
 I bare my burning breast,  
 Till Time lie down to rest,  
 The sun grow dim.

Till pole on flaming pole,  
 As in red fire a scroll  
 Curls, the wide heavens roll ;  
 Till the great seas,  
 God's wrath, enkindled, sup ;  
 Made empty as a cup  
 Whereout is drunken up  
 Wine to the lees.

Then while Creation groans  
 Death stricken, and the stones  
 Cry out, and dead men's bones—  
 Last harvest grim—  
 Like leprosy o'erspread  
 Blanched land, blear ocean bed,  
 Who judgeth quick and dead,  
 I'll say to Him :

" Lord, at Thy clarion blown  
 I come to claim my own."  
 Then shall this word be shown :  
 " O Aloÿs,  
 Can ye find faster bands ?  
 For, lo, thy lover stands,  
 Thy face within his hands,  
 To take thy kiss."



## NOCTURNE

HE.

THE heart of summer sighing  
 Throbs in my cithern string,  
 For the rose of June is dying,  
 July is whispering,  
 "My puissant reign is done."  
 And August murmurs, lying  
 Under a wearier sun,  
 "Ah, May, call back the summer."

SHE.

Make music to September,  
 But not to silvery May.  
 Not hers to blow the ember  
 Of fires that fade away :  
 She is youth ! she is youth's delight.  
 Shall the choral months dismember  
 Their dance to stay the flight  
 Of the careless spendthrift, summer ?

HE.

O lady of love, take pity.

SHE.

I pity, but thou must pine.

HE.

I weave my wayward ditty  
Of ivy and eglantine.

SHE.

It is fading, fading, fading.

HE.

Sweet, do not laugh to scorn  
Green grief of my autumn's braiding,  
Gold honey-love in the horn  
May set to the lips of summer.

## VENUS URANIA

PASSION dies, but Love immortal  
 Scatheless enters in, you said,  
 By the anguish-haunted portal  
 Of the country of the dead.  
 There her realm is; there are mended  
 All flawed hearts, their aching ended  
 With desire that fled.

Who shall answer? All the fancies  
 Man's sick heart could e'er devise,  
 Poems, visions, dreams, romances,  
 Faiths, and hopes and charities,  
 Every thought-begotten creature  
 There may gather form and feature  
 Out beyond the skies.

So this dream you dream of even  
 May find place among them all  
 In the windless fields of heaven  
 'Mid faint flowers funereal.  
 Pulseless love—and shine nor shadow,  
 Dark nor daylight finds the meadow  
 Where no blossoms fall.

When our tears are dried, and laughter  
 Silenced, and the heart's wild will  
 Broken, and for all hereafter  
 Change and chance are stricken still,  
 When despair is whole, or bliss is  
 Perfect, will discarnate kisses  
 Wake the olden thrill ?

Day by day is birth beholden  
 Unto death, and love to strife :  
 Closed or ope, no gateway golden  
 Breaks the boundary walls of life.  
 Take this thought to heart and ponder—  
 Why should disillusion yonder  
 With this lure be rife ?

Ending ere the night be ended,  
 Broken with the break of morn,  
 All their gauzy robes and splendid  
 Rainbow pinions frayed and torn,  
 Flee our dreams, alas, and straightway,  
 Vanish through the ivory gateway,  
 Not the gates of horn.

From her beacon-tower a single  
 Cresset Venus lights on high,  
 Softly sky and ocean mingle  
 Into sunset's harmony.  
 How the awning-lanterns glisten  
 Dully gold, and, dearest, listen  
 How that melody

Fount-like soars, and sinks to vanish

In the heart like summer rain !

Yet, in vain I seek to banish

From mine ears the stern refrain,

The interminable thunder

Of the great fans grinding under

Through the seething main.

Here the hushed air, suave and gracious,

Seems to fondle stars and sea.

Thought grows musical and spacious,

Merged in vagrant reverie.

Like to gods, we watch at leisure

Birth and death and grief and pleasure

Shape life's mystery.

But below, 'mid brass and iron,

Flame, and steam, and grime, and oil,

Souls whom flesh and blood environ

Perish in relentless toil.

As with blood, the fierce fires redden ;

Like the gasps of lips that leaden

Hiss the pipes that coil.

Man may love, but man must labour ;

Man may dream, he must have bread.

By the sound of pipe or tabor

Shall this flesh be clothed and fed?

Toil we must though life be waning ;

Only death can ease the straining

Heart and 'wilderer head.

Search the world's unwritten story—  
 History does but chronicle  
 War and worship, shame and glory,  
 But the legend who shall tell  
 Of the labour through the ages  
 Unrequited—all its wages  
 Life's bare husk and shell ?

Years pass by, and still we fare on.  
 Trust decays ; affection veers.  
 Love's rose blooms, a rose of Sharon,  
 On the Jordan of men's tears.  
 At foiled hope, faith unrequited,  
 Fate laughs loud, and, well delighted,  
 Laugh the unconquered years.

Long ago to wiser nations  
 This last word their sages spake :  
 " Be your souls possessed in patience ;  
 Eat your fill and drink, nor take  
 Heed of Acheron, while roses  
 Blossom, pluck till summer closes  
 In Love's myrtle brake."

## WINTER'S DAUGHTER

GOLD and clear azure overhead !  
The sun's wheel rolls victoriously  
Through rallying clouds and clouds that fly.  
The daffodils are fleeced with snow ;  
The snow's fair coverlet is spread  
Lightly on lawn and garden bed  
Where the white-wimpled snowdrops blow.

With cups of saffron'd hippocras  
The crocus studs the silvery grass :  
'Tis Winter's farewell feast to Spring.  
Virgin, she leaves his house to find  
Her lord the Summer. Down the wind  
Dart flickering threads and shreds of song  
The birds try over all day long,  
And prelude notes of thanksgiving.

## LIFE'S TOURNAMENT

EVERYTHING comes to an end at the last,  
The rout and the rally alike overpast,  
Grief ripens to sorrow and fades to regret ;  
And where is the pleasure that stayed with us yet ?

Youth's disillusion, maturity's care,  
Strip the lists of the banners that fluttered so fair ;  
And the trumpets which rang to our triumph or fall  
Hang dusty and dumb in Death's mouldering hall.



## DEMETER OF CNIDOS

ARISE, come forth Demeter,  
 O mother dear !  
 Sweet grow the days and sweeter  
 Upon the year.  
 The wet west wind is streaming  
 Through rainbow arches gleaming,  
 Across the furrows teeming,  
 For flowerful spring is here.

" Year after year, forsaken,  
 I sit alone.  
 Spring cannot warm or waken  
 My heart of stone :  
 And summer's graver glory,  
 Sad autumn, winter hoary,  
 Tell o'er a faded story  
 Of joys long overblown."

Hark to the wild birds calling,  
 Mate unto mate !  
 The chestnut fans are falling ;  
 The pomegranate  
 In crimson flame of flowers  
 Breaks, and the almond showers ;  
 The poplar tints her towers  
 With amber delicate.

"The old world, so blithe, is ended,  
 Like harvest done ;  
 Dead, as the seasons splendid  
 Died one by one.  
 All tires ; all breaks ; all passes  
 As cloud a river glasses,  
 Or dew from meadow grasses,  
 Or mist by dawning spun."

If not for blade or blossom  
 Or mantling tree,  
 For her who pressed thy bosom,  
 Persephone,  
 Take heart. Behold, thy daughter  
 Has crossed the fire and water,  
 And, seeking her who sought her,  
 She calls in vain to thee.

Her temples, sunk and wasted,  
 Dark ivy twines.  
 No corn her lips have tasted,  
 No juice of vines.  
 Goddess, I hear her weeping  
 Like one that sobs in sleeping,  
 Or night rains sifting, sweeping  
 Among the slumberous pines.

"She hath no thirst or hunger  
 For wine or bread.  
 She weeps not any longer :  
 Her tears are shed.

Long since from locks unbraided,  
The ivy leaves, that shaded  
Her brows, are fallen and faded.  
She sleeps among her dead."

"No throne is mine in heaven,  
No throne in hell.  
My dragons crushed, and riven  
My holiest cell.  
With these my part and place is—  
Stray wrecks of ruined races  
And weary phantom faces  
Of gods they once loved well !

British Museum. April, 1903.

## AT SEA

RHYMES recalling these  
 Days on lonely seas,  
 Hours of whitened wave or heaving calm,  
 Musing let me write  
 Ere, effacéd quite,  
 From the mind has fled the elusive charm.

Happier days, perchance,  
 Change and circumstance  
 In the years to come may bring to birth.  
 Yet not seldom they  
 That have passed away  
 Seem the fairest days of all on earth.

All in vain, in vain,  
 'Tis to seek again  
 Dreams that fled and joys that passed us by ;  
 But these verses, penned  
 Ere such things had end,  
 Shall be proof of their reality.

## THANK-OFFERING

As one scarce saved from wreck and brought to land,  
Through the dim swirling surges of the sea,  
With heart still full of death's sharp misery,  
Lies panting feebly on the striven for strand,  
And mutely presses his preserver's hand  
Ere yet articulate speech be formed and free,  
Such are my plight and thanks to you from me,  
Since the words follow not my thoughts' command.

But yet, but yet it may be there shall come,  
As the fire flickers in the kindling eyes  
Ere on the lips the flame of speech be lit,  
Into these lines whereof the soul is dumb,  
Some token of the gratitude that lies  
At the inmost heart, and is the soul of it.

## CALLISTO

Ah, so sweet beyond compare,  
The soft trouble in thine eyes,  
When the light is clouded there  
By the mists of love that rise,  
Love which yielding yet denies.

Ah, so fair, and ah, so sweet  
The soft tremor of thy mouth  
Ere surrender, grown complete,  
Harden it in passion's drouth  
Slakeless as the flaming South.

Footprint in the dews of dawn,  
Dustwhirl on a desert plain,  
Shadow of a flickering awn  
Of wheat that waits the harvest wain,  
These shall last if joy remain,  
Nymph, when all thy snows have thawed.

## LA BELLE JARDINIÈRE

NEVER wind has blown, nor rain  
 Fallen upon flowers like these :  
 Never grew such gracile trees,  
 Sceptral o'er so fair domain.  
 Where are heavens so clear of stain ?  
 Where, ah where, those purple hills  
 And the pensive peace that fills  
 All thy garden of heart's ease,  
 Mother of the Prince of Peace ?

Suavely as the flowers of sleep,  
 Droop the eyelids of her eyes.  
 Ah, what grave felicities  
 Arch the brows and bend the sweep  
 Of the curving lips that keep  
 One sweet smile, yet ever new  
 As the wonder of the dew—  
 The miracle of paradise  
 Wrought anew each morning-rise.

Is the languorous landscape there  
 Found in any world we know ?  
 Almost Fra Angelico  
 Might have limned those graces spare,  
 Tenuous in the Umbrian air

As the aureoled saints enskyed.  
 Seems the sun-kissed countryside  
 Half regretful to forego  
 The white maidenhood of snow.

In the fairy days of yore,  
 Prisoner in a magic cell  
 Was the princess doomed to dwell.  
 Clear the threshold of the door,  
 But, when she would cross it o'er,  
 A fine web of gossamer  
 Fell before the face of her.  
 Soon broken, but again there fell  
 That fragile film infrangible.

Welaway ! For out of reach  
 Eden lies. Before our face  
 Clinging threads of thought enlace  
 The door left open wide to each.  
 All our pains avail to teach  
 Only this—how vain are they.  
 Even so.

Yet welaway

For the lost and lovely place  
 Of rosemary and herb-o'-grace.



## CROCUS AND SMILAX

## CROCUS.

AH, the quiver, the throe, the thrill  
 Of the sap as it stirs and pricks,  
 And, as oil in enkindled wicks,  
 Mounts in each emerald quill !  
 Not yet has the daffodil  
 Dared forth ; Narcissus dreams  
 Of his mirroring pools and streams.  
 But at last, at last  
 Showers the gold of the sun  
 Down the freshening blast,  
 And the blood begins to run  
 In the veins of the frozen earth,  
 Till her torpid girth  
 Winces and wakes and glows  
 Under the muffling snows.

O sweet, sweet love of the starry eyes  
 Come back to thy lover. Awake ! Arise !  
 For the live winds clamour and fife and blare,  
 And is it not better to feel the sting  
 Of the vehement breath of the wild young spring  
 Than the fummy kiss of the ancient air  
 By poplared rivers of pale repose ?

## SMILAX.

Afar, like the voices pent  
In a spiral shell,  
From the dim firmament  
Of hollow hell  
Faint murmurs gather, and grow  
To the sound of a voice I know.  
Is it thou? Is it thou?  
Fair boy with the crown of gold,  
Come down to me.  
Let my faint limbs enfold  
And gather thee.  
My kisses shall teach thee how  
To dream long dreams,  
Sinking together so  
Into the noiseless flow  
Of measureless, mazy streams.  
Soft swayed in the darkness warm  
Of a liquid night,  
Our beings shall mix to form  
One sole delight,  
As we rock with the weeds that ride  
In the bosoming swell of the tide.

## CROCUS.

Ah, bid me not ere mine hour  
To breathe of the ancient air,  
My spirit unfolds in flower  
To worship thee elsewhere.

Love, stung to a wild desire,  
 Has kindled in saffron flames,  
 Gold flushing with rosy shames—  
 True blossoms of passion-fire—  
 Be swift, ere their glory drains  
 All life from my dwindling veins,  
 And themselves expire.

SMILAX.

I come ; but the ways are long  
 To the house of birth.

CROCUS.

Only follow the day-star's song  
 Which renews the earth.

SMILAX.

Nay ; dawn to this weary land  
 Comes never, nor eve, nor noon.  
 It is lit upon either hand  
 By a crescent and orbéd moon  
 Of argent beam.  
 Like a cataract from the height  
 Of heaven the white cascade  
 Of silvery frosty light  
 Pours down on the sombre shade  
 Of woodlands vast.

CROCUS.

While thou art dissolved in dream  
 My day flits fast.

## SMILAX.

As rains on a roof that dash,  
 The light in a deluge pours  
 With spangles and globes aflash  
 On the cedars and sycamores.  
 Till, even as sunlight shines  
 Through wind, with the moony showers  
 A mystical music twines,  
 And the notes of it turn to flowers  
 Around my feet.  
 Such splendours never were seen—  
 Large lilies of chrysoprase,  
 Violets of almandine,  
 Rose-opals that flicker and blaze—

## CROCUS.

Delay not, sweet,  
 For the life that arose in me  
 Flags witheringly.  
 Make haste on the haunted ways  
 That wind to the living light.

## SMILAX.

I am here.

## CROCUS.

Into night  
 I vanish as drooping day  
 Flares up and consumes away.

I am lapped in the ancient air,  
And desire has fallen from me  
As a robe flung loose to bare  
Hot limbs to the healing sea.

SMILAX.

Too late! Too late!  
My love of thee breaks in stars,  
And thou wouldst not wait!

CROCUS.

All pass. Thou art passing on,  
And I wait by the nenuphars  
Embosomed in floods that creep  
To the bottomless lightless deep,  
The abyss of oblivion.

## AT PRIME

Now the shadows of the night  
Perish in thy beams, O thou  
Of the flame-encircled brow,  
Phœbus, glorious lord of light.

Pythian, darter from afar,  
Hastily before thee driven,  
Flee the trembling flocks of heaven,  
Every planet, every star.

Paian, hear our humble prayer.  
Hear our prayer for her sweet sake,  
Daphne: grant this morn may break  
Fortunate for us, and fair.

Grant our love, like hers, to spring  
Fadeless still from year to year,  
Green when all beside is sear,  
Young when youth is withering.

## THE LAMENT OF PHRYNICHUS

BESIDE Mæanders stream and bay  
 The stateliest city earth has seen  
 Sat throned and crowned, as all men say :  
 Eleven proud cities hailed her queen.  
 Through her wide streets the riches rolled  
 Of Libyan gums and Sardian gold  
 And amber pale from oceans cold,  
 Miletus, ah, Miletus !

The hosts of Persia swarmed around  
 Her walls ; the Tyrian triremes shone  
 From cape to cape across the sound,  
 Blue sailed, with prows vermilion.  
 Dearth broke the strength no sword could quell :  
 At last the mighty city fell,  
 The city by the gods loved well,  
 Miletus, ah, Miletus !

Her young men slain, her maidens saved  
 To languish in a life of shame,  
 Her nobles captive or enslaved,  
 Her temples sacked, her halls in flame,  
 Such was thy daughter's end who prayed,  
 Athens, to thee for sea-borne aid ;  
 By thee forsaken, thee betrayed,  
 Weep for thy lost Miletus.

## RENEE

## I.

## HOPE'S HAVEN.

CALM seas, wherein the stars of heaven  
 Dissolve their fallen fires to shine  
 Transfused in lucent hyaline  
 Beyond the lilac floors of even,

Enfold the true Inarime.  
 White are her marble cliffs ; the sand  
 Lies like a curved and golden brand  
 Between them and the purple sea.

Ah, hope's own haven ! Happiest home  
 Of heart's delight, and loveliest !  
 Whither as star-flights seek the West  
 All fair things, lost and longed for, come.

Yes, all we fail of here—the song  
 Unsung which haunts a poet's heart,  
 The glorious shape no sculptor's art  
 Yet fixed in marble, thoughts that throng

The soul with sudden ecstasy  
 Of insight and lay bare the core  
 Of life's enigma,—then once more  
 The veil falls, and we wonder why



This world's worth seems as nothingness,—  
 And chosen souls, called early hence  
 From Earth's inclement indigence  
 Of beauty, and the warping stress

Of iron laws which year by year  
 Grind down the spirit,—all are there  
 With Renée of the shining hair,  
 So loved, so lost, so dear.

## II.

### THE ISLE OF HOMECOMING.

In the Isle of Homecoming  
 No sorrow aches at evenfall,  
 Nor wakes when dawn's sad cymbals call  
 To-day's waste care and travailing.

The fresh glad charm of leafy springs  
 Serene and gracious ever lies  
 On Renée. Light of heart she flies  
 On that soft air's cærulean wings

To take her welcome. "Hither, sweet,"  
 "Come hither!" rising from their place,  
 The queens of heaven, fulfilled with grace,  
 Call to her, stretching arms to greet,—

Agatha, Agnes, Catharine,  
 And Dorothy whose messenger  
 Came down from heaven to carry her  
 Corymbus, wonderful, divine,

To the good knight Theophilus ;  
 And with the roses on her knee  
 Elizabeth of Hungary,—  
 “ Oh, stay thy flight,” they pray, “ with us

“ In our fair garden’s fadeless bowers  
 Where is not any fruit forbid,  
 Nor the old serpent’s trail lies hid  
 Among the purple passion-flowers.”

In the Isle of Homecoming  
 All the air is as one tune,  
 Melting through some magic swoon  
 From purling pipe and pulsing string,

For all the leaves of melody  
 Are full, and every flower that blows  
 Exhales sweet sound, as doth the rose  
 Her perfume when the wind goes by.

### III.

#### THE LYRE OF LOVE.

Then one of that fair company,—  
 St. Cecily,—her sunny head  
 With damask roses garlanded,  
 Whispers, “ Dear child, take flight with me.”

They laugh : and, light as thistle-seed  
 Or cloud-shadows on waving wheat,  
 Borne on the wind’s stream off their feet,  
 They glide away—so sails a glede

Aslant on stirless pinions wide—  
 Upward and onward over palm  
 And cedar to a cliff that calm  
 O'erlooks the many-laughing tide.

And on that thymy foreland's shoulder  
 Set, like a cameo brooch that holds  
 A green and silken tunic's folds,  
 Beam the rosy roofs and smoulder

Duskier cell and portico  
 Of a red carnelian fane :  
 Seven slim columns rare of stain  
 Stand on either side arow.

Beneath the level architrave  
 Their polished shafts in panels blue  
 Frame air and sea, so blent their hue.  
 Scarce one discerns the wind from wave.

Convolvulus all dreamily  
 Trails, ruffling in the long sea breeze,  
 Along the gilded cornices  
 Where white doves croon their monody.

And there is met a stately choir,—  
 Masters of song from many days  
 And lands :—with loving looks and praise  
 A tortoiseshell and ivory lyre

They place upon her childish knee,  
 And teach her little hands to go  
 Across the silver strings and strow  
 Their music of eternity.

Then each with other all rejoice ;  
 O'er the cliff's brink their pæan's swell  
 Rolls, and the angel Israfel,  
 Hearing afar, attunes his voice.

## IV.

## AFTER MANY DAYS.

Ah me ! For them with lightsome leap  
 Time passes, while with feet that crawl  
 Round Earth's beclouded sun-dial  
 Our sullen Hours reluctant creep.

But when at last we fall on rest,  
 And as a garment cast away  
 This threadbare life of hodden grey,  
 O island of the shoreless West,

Waking, may we behold thee there  
 Beyond the lilac floors of even,  
 And 'mid the aureoled choirs of heaven  
*Her* love-lit eyes and shining hair !

## PANDEAN

WAVE-MOWN swathes of moonlit beaches,  
 Many a night ere life began,  
 Crystal-zoned, with wildfires sparkling  
 In our back-blown tresses, darkling  
 We have danced the dance of Pan  
 Down your lonely reaches.

Hark! Above the booming surges  
 Bitter-sweet the syrinx thrills.  
 How the reedy notes go silting  
 Through the tumult! How the lilting  
 Mournful music overfills  
 All the lorn sea verges!

Swooping from their sparry regions  
 On the roaring wings of storm,  
 Rush the Oreads, the tameless  
 Daughters of the wind, with nameless  
 Nymphs who drive the silent swarm  
 Of the snow-flake legions.

Hamadryads from the valleys,  
 Loath to quit their lichened shells,  
 Drift along; their leafy tresses  
 Rustle of green wildernesses,  
 Wafting faint and ferny smells  
 Moist from runnelled alleys.

Claspless from the Naiad's shoulder  
Slid, her dripping draperies  
Slip from myosotis-laden  
Hands. The lissom river-maiden  
Stays the folds on lifted knees  
Lest the Fauns behold her.

Night is done. The moon declining  
Wanes to white carnelian.  
Shadowy wraiths, the Sylvens caper,  
Whirling off in wreaths of vapour.  
Once, afar, the pipes of Pan  
Sob ; then cease their pining.

## MEMORIA

## I.

FROM out the East the tides of morning flow,  
And virgin peaks, their flanks of flawless snow  
Unveiling, bathe in streams of limpid day.

The stars and dreams of night die down the West,  
As the wind wakes, and waves from the ocean's breast  
Leap up and toss their manes of glittering spray.

It is the hour when thought grows cold and clear ;  
The hour of lapsing love ; the hour when near  
Draws the dread thing we live to keep at bay.

The spectral hound which haunts and hunts the soul  
From birth to death, and if beyond the goal  
Of life its fangs shall tear us—who shall say ?

## II.

The dawn-wind sobs across the silent land.  
How cold your fingers lie within my hand,  
And in the gathering light, your face how gray !

I hear the whisper of each hollow shell,  
Which was your heart and mine wherein did dwell  
Love once, re-echoing : " Flown, long flown away."

Cliff beyond cliff, the coast-line towards the South  
Lies grand and grim; nor hollow of harbour mouth  
Is there, nor land-locked cove nor sheltered bay,

And year by year we pass, as cape by cape.  
Each headland hailed has seemed the looked for shape  
Where, there—but just beyond—our haven lay.

So youth decays; his garlands fall to dust:  
And dries the gourd of pilgrimage he thrust  
To fill within the enchanted fountain's play.

### III.

As when beneath the feet of the urgent sun  
The grass swathes shrink and whiten, one by one,  
Till all the air is rich with scents of hay,

So from dry days and dead, dim scents and sweet  
Seem crushed by one that lifts no nimble feet,  
And round our sense confused, to float and play.

With burning hands that char the rue they hold,  
And stumbling feet that flew so swift of old,  
Memory, with hands of fire but feet of clay,

Approaches, saying: "Ah foolish, would ye fly  
From your own selves, for your dead selves am I?  
Slain once alive, these dead ye shall not slay."



“Take this for sad remembrance.”—So she said,  
The withered stalks with face averse and head  
Close veiled extending. But we answered: “Nay.”

“Bringer of grief, depart! We will have none  
Of thy most bitter herb. Thine hour is done;  
Thou canst not charm us more with that dead spray.

“Come, if thou wilt, with euphrasy to purge  
Our eyes to pierce the mist Time’s breaking surge  
Sends up, and that red glare of breaking day.”

## THE FLUTES OF DEATH

Most gentle of all deities, O queen  
 Compassionate and tender and benign,  
 Lady of pity and peace, sweet shade serene,  
 Calm shelter of all shadows, Proserpine,  
 Again I stand a suppliant at thy gate  
 And shivering wait  
 Wistful and weary. Canst thou hear my call  
 There in thy palace hall  
 Across the eddying stream of liquid sound  
 Slow flowing from thy melancholy flutes,  
 That wanders like deep waters underground  
 Below life's tangled roots?

Through the wild scroll-work wafts a musky air  
 So deadly sweet, I reel, and to a gasp  
 My cry sinks broken: blindly, unaware,  
 My fingers fold upon the fatal hasp.  
 Behind me whines the bitter wind of ill,  
 And still, and still  
 Upon my face, frozen in miseries,  
 Blows warm the thawing breeze.  
 And alway do the dreamy flutes bemoan  
 Some old unhappy doom, the doom that springs,  
 Like water bubbling through uncloven stone,  
 To reach the roots of things.

Green dusk'd and purple litten, vague and vast,  
 Death's garden lay before me. On the lawns,  
 Like smoke-wreaths veering in a fitful blast,  
 Danced their old dances still the Nymphs and Fauns.  
 Down dim arcade and alley, in and out  
 A phantom rout  
 Thiasian flitted ; timbrel, sistrion, drum  
 They bore, but all was dumb.  
 Only, far up within the doméd gloom,  
 High echoes pined against the flutes below,  
 Chiming aerial antiphons of doom  
 Whose meaning none may know.

Vistas of moony jasper colonnade  
 Led to the audience chamber and the throne  
 Where she, white flower-like blossom of the shade,  
 Waits for the wanderer and waits alone.  
 About her brows and weight of umber hair  
 No crown was there  
 But ivy only, and the darksome green  
 Those dusky coils between  
 Shone cloudily as some mid ocean shoal  
 Where a drowned alp gigantic rears his head.  
 The damask draperies of her broidered stole  
 Seemed woven of summers dead.

Kneeling, I clasped her knees but could not speak,  
 While soft as falling snow her accents fell :  
 " O thou so pitiful and worn and weak,  
 Take at my hands the assuaging œnomet."

I drank : then over me her loosened hair  
Swept like a billow breaking in the night.  
Her arms, the arms of sleep, went round me there,  
And with a kiss she put the past to flight,  
Whose joy and sorrow, love and hope and hate  
Are but the passage of ephemeral breath  
In music blown by unremembering Fate  
Upon the flutes of Death.

## ERATO

LIKE a scented flame, on the fringed carnations  
Feeds the noonday glare, and the Hours lie fallen  
Fast asleep with drizzle of fountain spray-mist  
Cooling their slumber.

Nod the rose-nymphs all, and their knees relaxing  
Under robes aurorean tinged, or amber,  
White, or dyed ingrain of resplendent crimson,  
Sink overweighted.

All day long in delicate thought enfolded,  
Stainless, tall, erect in the sultry silence,  
Stand the perfumed ranks of the virgin lily.  
Trellis and arbour,

Green with multitudinous leaves of grape-vines,  
Hold still pools of shade as a cistern, water.  
Shadows fleck the silver and tawny sanded  
Paths like a pard-skin.

Ah, that day long dead, when the breeze of morning  
Shook the globéd dew from the rose and lily ;  
Swung the purple sumptuous clusters pendent  
Under the vine leaves !

When, as shadows melt in the noon's embraces,  
Sense and thought dissolved as mine eyes beheld thee,  
Mistress, O my queen, Erato belovéd,  
Standing before me,

Crowned with love's own roses and milk-white myrtle,  
Lips apart, and hands with the lyre uplifted,  
Eyes wherein the stars of the morn and even  
Mingled together.

Forth in song untamable, joyous, tender,  
Gushed the wine of love like a fountain springing.  
All my life leapt up with the leaping rhythms ;  
Fell with the cadence.

Passion-plumed, the strains of the lyre immortal  
Thronged my ears insatiate, till the rapture  
Whelmed my heart that ached as a wound within me  
Even to breaking.

“Cease ; no more !” I cried. “For thy breath destroys  
me ;  
Burns my lips as fire, and the music flame-wise  
Sears my soul. Ah, cease : I endure no longer.  
Let it suffice thee.”

Then the singing ceased, and the music, broken,  
Floated down the wind in a plaint expiring,  
Like a rainbow mist from the spiry fountain  
Dying in colour.



## HERSE

GATHER me under thy wings, O night : from the fear  
that besets me

Cover and keep me and fold me where only the  
kisses of sleep

Dwell on my face in the dark. Close, close till his  
passion forgets me

Hide me away from the god of the day 'neath thy  
pinions' sweep.

Closelier over me now and about me thy plumage of  
sable

Down sinks soft as a cloud whose bosom is heavy  
with rain.

Soft, yet no transient gloom be thine, nor a presence  
unstable

Leaving me lorn to the smile of the dawn at my  
ruin again.

Ah, the long cooling caress of the star-sprinkled wind  
that is flowing

Smooth through the tenebrous isles of the trees and  
the wan faint glow

Of elder brushes that glimmer, as rocks in the south  
wind blowing

Whiten when breaks the embrace of the wave into  
kisses of snow.



Life's melopœia dies down: slow lapses the rhythm  
abated

To tunes such as drone round Persephone's throne  
when the goblet is crowned .

With nepenthe spondean; and ever the fume of the  
patins affreighted

With amber and musk floats away through the  
dusk on the burden of sound.

As my senses subsiding in lethargy leave me, her  
casket enchanted

Mnemosyne opes, and I wander 'mid dreams as a  
dream with the rest;

Among memories a happy remembrance, a joy unpro-  
faned and undaunted,

Serene with impassible eyes and superb with imma-  
culate breast,

A goddess, the child of Selene, and nurseling of night  
the restorer

Of strength to the weary and ease to the anguished  
and all that the day

Dispossesses the soul of to leave her a waif on the  
deserts before her

That desolate spread with the bones of the dead for  
a sign by the way.

Woe, alas! Is it daybreak so soon? what refuge  
remains me, or cover?

Lo, in the orient arisen, what meteor crimsons the  
air!

He comes, my desire and my bane, destroyer and  
captor and lover,

With fires that ensanguine the sea-line below, and  
 the flame of his hair  
 Gold-shining. The steeds whinny shrill as they stand  
 on the causeway all-brazen,  
 The gem-studded pole-head slow thrusting the  
 portals of heaven apart.  
 Come forth ; make an end of this terror that grips me,  
 the anguish that plays on  
 My spirit, and strokes with pain's plektron the  
 strings that are stretched on my heart.  
 Unto thee my last hope is, O mother most holy and  
 strong to deliver.  
 Haste, for I perish ignobly, a victim disdained and  
 defiled.  
 Fair shining star-queller, the horns of thy crescent  
 drawn close, from thy quiver  
 Send the shaft that may slay me, though child of a  
 goddess is Herse thy child.  
 What ! Is it thou, then, from ocean ascending, Selene,  
 to aid me ?  
 Is it thou at my calling who comest, most dear, for  
 my spirit's release ?  
 Better to die at thy hands than to suffer his will who  
 betrayed me,  
 For thine arrows fall gently as tears fall under the  
 kisses of peace.  
 Wilt thou not tarry and turn to the pitiful cry that is  
 pleading,  
 Pleading as only a child to her mother can plead?  
 But thy car

Up the unscaleable star-thronged heights through  
 heaven receding,

Moves; in the halo irradiant around it, lo star upon star  
 Transfused! Ah, the life that thou gavest, take back.

Let thy glory enfold me.

In thy luminous aureole enswathed, let me vanish  
 as into the sea

Fades the white dream of the foam, and never shall  
 Eos behold me

Borne afar and away from the confines of day to  
 thy cavern with thee.

Still thy chariot moves upward and onward, serenely,  
 securely, sedately,

As a dromond slips sailing away from a swimmer, a  
 speck in her wake.

Am I thy daughter indeed, O power imperturbable,  
 stately?

What hast thou done for me, borne for me, striven  
 or felt for my sake?

Ah me, that my life as a garment were doffed, and as  
 vesture were changéd,

Ere I sicken at sight of the gathering light in the  
 precincts afar

Where the Hours of the morning, high-girt, proces-  
 sional, joyous, and rangéd,

Stand hard by the portals celestial, the ponderous  
 valves to unbar.

Out of obscurity looming, of heaven the vast propylæa  
 Acroceranion that stand 'twixt earth and the  
 fortress divine,

Vast, stupendous, with columns colossal as peaks of  
     Pangæa,  
     Rise, the entablature fronted with stars, and the  
     gable ashine  
 Glorious with great constellations. How lovely the  
     hues of the æther,  
     Lake, limpid yellow and azure, the green of a wave  
     as it rolls,  
 Play on the pillars of fire-fringed cloud! How the  
     ocean, beneath her  
     Reddening, flames as flamboyant dawn soars up  
     from the goals  
 Of the sun! Now the fire-steeds leap up over the  
     barrier, extremest  
     Horizon of orbital circles that compass and wall us  
     around,  
 Unseen, unattainable ever. O god of my ruin, thou  
     beamest  
     Forth, and before thee are scattered the stars, and  
     the moon as a sound  
 Dies out, and the fastnesses fall of the night, and her  
     hidden dominions  
     Under thee naked, defenceless, lie; and I tremble and  
     cower  
 Deep in the moist red heart of a rose from the whirl of  
     the pinions  
     Of thy griffins hovering above me as humming-  
     moths over a flower.  
 But the rose laughs amorously, and petal by petal  
     unfolding,

Bares her opulent bosom to welcome the deluge of  
 germinal gold  
 And warm and voluptuous his breath plays over mine  
 eyes unbeholding,  
 Closed as I slip through cool verdures adrip to the  
 moss-padded mould.  
 Shameless, the red rose mocks at my flight, and her  
 sister, the frailer  
 Colourless blossom, deriding saith "Fleest thou,  
 virgin, and whom?  
 Has not our lover, thine also, enjoyed thee, O Herse,  
 that paler  
 Than we with the passion that drains thee, thou  
 feignest to hide in the gloom?"  
 Out of thy chambers, O lily, thy perfumed pellucid  
 recesses  
 White as the moonlight and powdered with aureate  
 moon-coloured dust,  
 Yield me not up to the fierce sweet shame of his  
 ruthless caresses.  
 Too late! For they seize me and bear me aloft  
 in a dizzying gust  
 Of passionate ecstasy rising in rapture ineffable.  
 Spare me!  
 Bid me not perishing yield up my soul to be burned  
 in our bliss.  
 Nay, as thou wilt, then, belovéd; assume me and  
 ravish and bear me  
 A mist through the sky mounting moth-like to die  
 and be lost in thy kiss.

## ANTEROS

STARLIKE, Love will shine above thee  
Making melody that stirs  
Wandering echoes in thy spirit,  
Till his very song, thou hear it  
When thy lips shall silence hers  
Murmuring "I love thee."

Then the cold, the distant splendour  
Shall be flame in her sweet eyes,  
And the spherul music broken  
Into passion's anthem spoken  
Half in kisses, half in sighs  
Deep with slow surrender.

## EPILOGUE

FAREWELL, farewell ; my masque of song is over ;  
 The mimes' brief pageantry dissolves away  
 And with them I, a shadow even as they,  
 A singing voice, no more. Not mine to cover  
 Stern truths with winning phrases, in sweet sound  
 Dissembling new philosophies profound.  
 In parables I speak not, nor, O friend,  
 To message or to prophecy pretend,  
 Pæan or psalm of some diviner day.

Yet linger, if you list, within the garden  
 My muse has tended. Tarry at your ease,  
 Letting your thoughts roam like the honey-bees  
 Down flowery ways, while Erato the warden  
 Makes mellow music all the summer noon,  
 Lulling us to forgetfulness how soon  
 Music and summer, noon and song must go  
 Their way, the old sad road that leads below.  
 And we—must we too fall and follow these ?

Whither ? Ah, thought to stun and stagger reason,  
 This flesh shall see corruption. Here we sit,  
 Warm and alive, and try to picture it,  
 The loathsome end, but cannot. Change of season,

Winter for summer, night for day, the sleep  
 Of passive age for life's impetuous leap  
 In youth, involve us and we understand :  
 But not that Change with uncreating hand  
 Hid in the grisly horror of the Pit.

And other fears there be, dim gulfs of terror  
 Above, beneath, without us and within :  
 The ghost inscrutable this body's skin  
 Encloses, consciousness the magic mirror  
 Itself reflecting, boundless spaces dread,  
 Deep beyond deep, of starry heaven o'erhead,  
 Reason divided 'gainst herself that sees  
 Truth's rock a quicksand of antinomies,  
 And time's abyss, and mystery of sin.

But as one, led by cloud-hung precipices  
 Along a dizzy ledge, who feels the sense  
 Of empty space become a dazed immense  
 Impulse to plunge down infinite abysses,  
 Steadies his gaze on weed or crannied flower  
 Whose humble charm wards off the hostile Power,  
 So I with frail deciduous blooms of song  
 Rescue my soul from the bewildering throng  
 Of thoughts that daunt and yet allure her hence.

Still, though so fugitive my flowers and lowly,  
 Such inconspicuous herbs as one may deign  
 Idly to cull and cast aside again,  
 Yet are they witnesses to that most holy



Beauty, eternal, infinite, the truth  
Transcendant, bloom and crown of lovely youth,  
The graciousness of manhood, and the sage  
Serene nobility of reverend age,  
Man's song of praise, and music of his pain.

On thy pure altar stone, O radiant spirit,  
I lay this garland of my heart's increase,  
Sorrow's dark violet, the leaves of peace,  
Love's myrtle, sleep's red poppy-flower, and near it  
The paler, chosen of death for anadem.  
Ah, take the gifts because my life with them  
Is offered. And a stephanotis spray,  
Odorous and white, beside my wreath I lay,  
Won from thy fadeless glorious garden, Greece.

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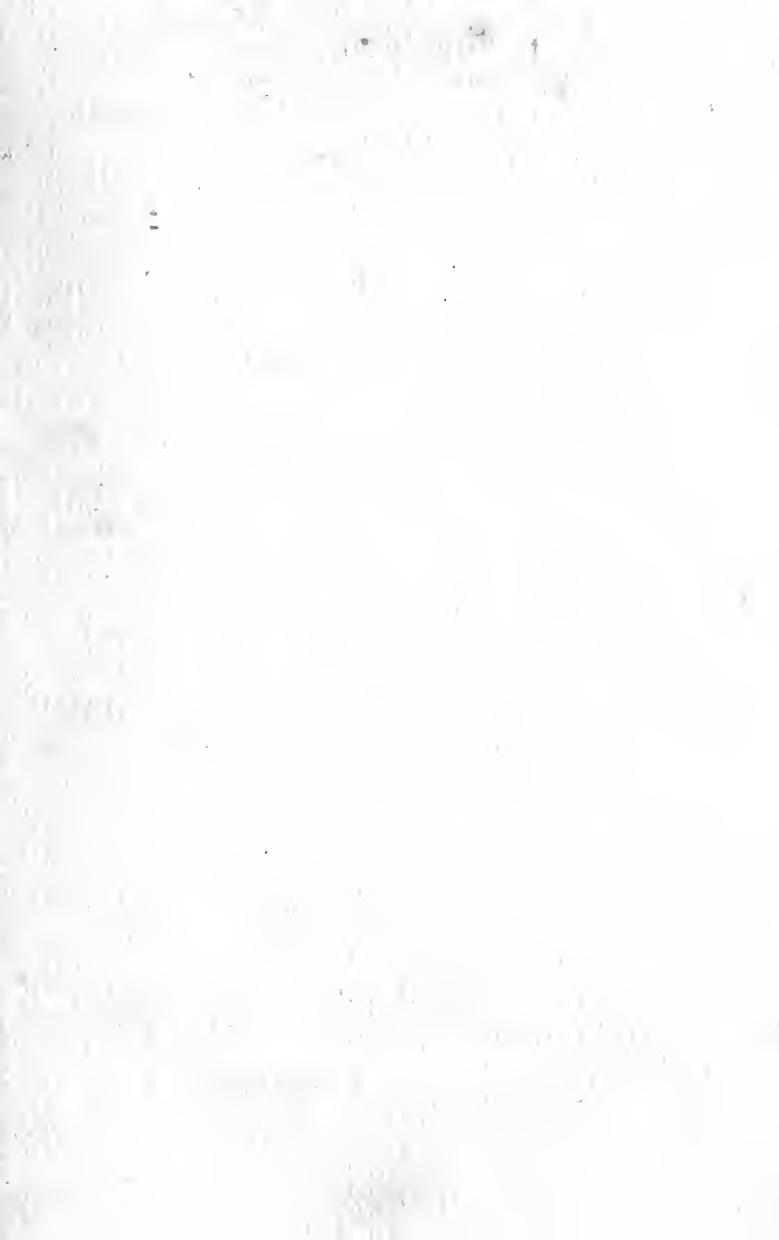
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