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54 (ANON.), A Gentleman of Cambridge (A. Crowley), the Tale of Archais, a Romance in Verse, 1898, sm. 4to, unopened and uncut, *scarce*. 18/6

55 **CROWLEY** (A.), Mortadello or the Angel of Venice, a Comedy, 1910, sm. 4to, white buckr. 10/6

56 ——— The High History of Good Sir Palamedes, the Saracen Knight, and of his following of the Questing Beast, brightly set forth in Rime, dedicated to Allan Bennett (Bhikkhu Ananda Metteyya, the lately deceased head of the Buddhist movement in England), "my good knight comrade in the quest, I dedicate this imperfect account of it, in some small recognition of its form, Mandalay, 1905; from the last chapter:

"Arise, brave soldier, thou hast roon,
The quest not given to mortal men.
Arise, Sir Palamede Adept,
Sir Palamede the Saracen,
Was master. Through the domes of death,
Through all the might realms of men."

4to, bound in white vellum, gold lettering, 1912, *very scarce*, hand-made paper. 30/-

57 ——— The Mother's Tragedy, and other Poems, *privately printed*, 1901, 1*st ed.*, fine copy, *very scarce;* also The Fatal Force, a poem of the Egyptian Mysteries, hand-made paper. 17/6

58 ——— Konx Om Pax, Essays in Light, as new, fine copy, hand-made paper, one of 500, *with signed port. of Author*, 1907. 30/-

59 ——— The Soul of Osiris, a History, 1901, 8vo, canvas back, labels, a Book of Poems, containing: The Gate of the Sanctuary, cycle, The Holy Place, The Holy of Holies, The Neophyte, The Evocation, The Rosicrasian, etc., one of the earliest of this author's published works, hand-made paper. 15/-

60 ——— The Winged Beetle, a Book of Poems, containing Rosa Cœli and many other verses, with the translation of Eliphas Levi's famous hymn, The Magician, printed on hand-made paper, one of 50 copies privately printed, *with the autograph of the author*—to Reginald Haselden from Aleister Crowley, 1910, white buckr., gold lettering, ex. 8vo. £1

61 ——— Jepthah and other Mysteries, Lyrical and Dramatic, *London*, 1899, hand-made paper, uncut. This book, one of the earliest of Aleister Crowley's poems, is said to contain some of his most beautiful verse, it is dedicated to Algernon Charles Swinburne, of whom one is reminded by much in this book, also reminiscent of Baudelaire—yet strangely virile and original in conception, *very rare*. 21/-

62 ——— The Collected Works of, printed on sm. 8vo India paper, in 3 vols., paper covers, Vol. 1, 1905, Vol. 2, 1906, Vol. 3, 1907, containing all his published work up to this date, amongst others found herein are: Songs of the Spirit Mysteries, Jezebel, Why Jesus Wept, Science and Buddhism, Oracle, Alice, an Adultery, The God-Eater, Rodin in Rome, Gargoyles . . . 3 vols. 30/-

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THE TALE OF ARCHAIS

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THE

TALE OF ARCHAIS

A ROMANCE IN VERSE

BY A GENTLEMAN OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF CAMBRIDGE

LONDON
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO.
MDCCCXCVIII

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TO

THE WHITE MAIDENS OF ENGLAND

THIS TALE OF GREECE

IS

DEDICATED

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THE AUTHOR'S BALLADE OF HIS TALE

Go to the woodlands, English maid,
  Or where the downs to seaward bend,
When autumn is in gold arrayed,
  Or spring is green, or winters send
A frosty sun, or summers blend
  Their flowers in every dainty dye,
And take, as you would take a friend,
  This pleasant tale of Thessaly.

Lie on the greensward, while the shade
  Shortens as morning doth ascend
The gates of Heaven, and bud and blade
  Laugh at the dawn, while breezes lend
Their music, till you comprehend
  The meaning of the world, and sigh—
Yet love makes happy in the end
  This pleasant tale of Thessaly.

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Turn from my book, the poet prayed,
  And look to Heaven, an hour to spend
Before His Throne Who spake and bade
  The fountains of the deep descend,
And bade the earth uproot and rend,
  To pitch like tents the mountains high,
And gave him language who hath penned
  This pleasant tale of Thessaly.

ENVOI

Fair maiden, who hast rightly weighed
  The message of the morning sky,
Think kindly of the man who made
  This pleasant tale of Thessaly.

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PROLOGUE

THE FAITH OF LIFE

"Yea, with thine hate, O God, thou hast covered us."
SWINBURNE, *Atalanta.*

YEA, one singeth, with thine hate
  Thou hast covered us, O God!
Nay, another answers straight
  (Low his lute's sweet period):
Sink those bitter staves of wrath!
  Cease that angry trumpet's blare!
Sunlight burns a rosy path
  Yonder through the sky to where
Flowers bud and linnets sing;
Love's expressed in everything;
  We are covered with thy love

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As the nestlings of a dove;
We are sheltered in the shadow of thy wing.

Are the roses dead to-day?
Is the wine spilt? Is the flute
Broken? Is thy lover fled?
Has the dancer danced away?
Is the voice of ocean mute?
Is the hour of dreamland dead?
Nay, the slumbers of thine head
Shall be until thy lures,
Love shall gird thee as a garment while thy very
life endures.
Sing, lute, sing a sweeter measure,
Drown the wild discordant notes,
Life, sob out thy chant of pleasure
(Love a lure, and life a treasure)
As a thousand thrushes' passion
Throbbed it from a thousand throats,
In the wild Hesperian gardens, in the old
Danaic fashion.

Bard of Fate, thy song is ended:
Splendid it began and splendid

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Rolled and roared and soared to sky ;
Lofty head and knee unbended
Dared and dazzled the offended
Lord of Triple Deity.

* * *

But thine arrow sped awry,
Struck the gentle Christ again ;
But he smiled through all his pain :
" Priestcraft and red tyranny
Have usurped My crown :
Children, in my sceptre lurks
The old fire, with you works
All My Strength Immortal, when you tear the
lying fabric down."

May Man's Spirit yet be great ?
Gather power himself to rule,
Master circumstance and fate,
Laugh for joy and smile for dule,
Weep brave tears while lute-strings sob,
Clench brave hands when bosoms throb,
Till his soul beyond control
Break the fetters ; sweep across
Worlds and waves on wings, wind-wafted, whiter
than the albatross,

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Conquering and to conquer earth ;
Surge, a sea of fiery waves,
Through the continent of graves,
Bringing all the dead to birth ;
Rage, a warrior-band, to bring
Right and truth to everything,
Burning sorrow into mirth,
Cradling, like a child, delight
Born from the Cimmerian darkness of the hollow
womb of Night,
By the father of the gods,
And the seasons' periods
To Eternity, the ocean flooded with the river,
Light.

Ouranos! Wave wide thy pinions
Azure in the azure air,
Over the serene dominions
That our love has made so fair:
Hark, O Heaven! Hail thy sister, Earth, expanding everywhere
With the blossom of God's smile.
Hark, old Ouranos, awhile
To the music welling up
From the sea of molten glass,

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From the poppy's crimson cup,
And the mountain's hoary mass;
Sea and land are filled with song,
God, whom we mistrusted long,
We perceive to be a friend;
Man at last with flower and tree,
Bird and butterfly and bee,
Earth and fire and air and sea,
Will his voice divinely blend
In a song, whose holy incense up to Heaven shall ascend,
And the souls that stand and shiver
On the borders of the River,
Shall their arms extend
Unto Death as to a lover, knowing Death is not the End.

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THE TALE OF ARCHAIS

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PART I

FAINT hymns of tender-throated bacchanals
  Sigh through the forest, and forbidden dance
  Flashes the sunlight back with rhythmic glance
Of dewy feet that trip; while dainty falls
Of spray-clad springs keep time: the summer haze
  Lies on the cornfields, the pale Corybant
  Dreams to the restless breeze that flings aslant
Locks of vain love to strange and sunless rays
That are the kiss of Bacchos' wanton mouth.
  On such a lawn the tender Charicles
  Stretched limbs, that greet this morning of the May
With sweet shy vigour, while from out the south
  Toward his lips there came the shining breeze
  To taste life crystal-clear, and die away.

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Across the velvet sward, towards the brook,
  That now sang dances over pebble bed,
  Now sighs of vain love-longing whisperéd,
Now broke in madrigals, and now forsook
  The cadence of its various melody
For music's deepest mood—a silence dim,
Now under willows bubbled to the brim,
  Now over mosses murmured quietly,
And now spread out into an azure pool
  Whose floor was pearl, whose walls were adamant,
  Behold there came a sylph, whose dreamy eyes
Lit all the lawn, clear-glancing, deep, and cool;
  Whose curls were billowy gold luxuriant
  With stars and scents of summer woods and skies.

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The maiden's face was lucent; like a rose
  Amid the nebulous cluster of pale gold
  That twined in marvellous love-locks manifold
Around her brow; men's lusts and women's woes
Had not drawn nigh to dim those luminous eyes
  Full of strange longings, dreams not understood,
  Nor drawn around them th' amethystine hood
That life's dark pencil draws, and in no wise
Was the soft bloom departed from the cheek,
  Clear, more of rose than of ivory. Nor had Shame
  And Lust made rich and full and ripe and red
The dainty child-lips, nor made fierce and sleek
  The subtle smile that flickered as a flame
  About her lips, and lightly came and fled.

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She lay within the water, and the sun
Made golden with his pleasure every one
Of small cool ripples that surround her throat,
Mix with her curls, and catch the hands that float
Like water-lilies on the wave; she lay
And watched the silver fishes leap and play,
And almost slept upon the soughing breast
That murmured gentle melodies of rest,
And touched her tiny ear, and made her dream
Of sunny woods above the sacred stream
Where she abode (her home was cool and dark
That no small glow-worm with his tender spark
Might lighten till the moon was down, a nook
Far from the cool enticements of the brook,
And hidden in the boskage close and green.)
So dreamed she, smiling like a faëry queen;
So the bright feet and forehead of the breeze
Lured her to sleep, and shook the morning trees
Clear of the dewfall, and disturbed the grass,
So that no rustle, should a serpent pass,
Might rouse her reverie. So then, behold,
Chance leant from Heaven with feet and face of
gold,
And hid the iron of her body bare
With such warm cloudlets as the morning air

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Makes to conceal the fading of the stars:
Chance bowed herself across the sunny bars,
And watched where through the silence of the lawn
Came Charicles, the darling of the dawn,
Slowly, and to his steps took little heed;
He came towards the pool, his god-wrought reed
Shrilling dim visions of things glorious,
And saw the maiden, that disported thus,
And worshipped. Then in doubt he stood, grown white
And wonderful, with passion's perfect might
Firing his veins and tingling in his brain,
He stood and whitened, and waxed red again.
His oat unheeded glanced beneath the wave,
His eyes grew bright and burning, his lips clave—
A sudden cry broke from him: from the height
His swift young body, like a ray of light,
Divides the air, a moment, and the pool
Flings up the spray like dew, divinely cool:
A moment, and he flashed towards her side
And caught her trembling, as a tender bride
At the first kiss; he caught her, and compelled
Her answer, in his arms securely held.
And she no word might say, her red lips quailed,

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Her perfect eyelids drooped, her warm cheek
paled,
A tear stole over it. His lips repent
With vain weak words—O iron firmament!
How vain, how cold are words!—his lips repeat
Their faint sweet savour, but her rosy feet
Held in his hands and touched with reverent lips
Revived her soul more perfectly. Soon slips
Her gentle answer; now her timid eyes
So tender with the lifted lashes rise
To meet his gaze.
He spoke: "Have pity on me
Who wronged thee for my perfect love of thee,
My perfect love, O love! for strange and dread
Delights consume me; I am as one dead
Beating at Heaven's gate with nerveless wing,
Wailing because the song the immortals sing
Is so fast barred behind the iron sky.
Speak but thine anger quickly; let me die!"
"But I forgive thee, thou art good and kind."
"O love! O love! O mistress of my mind,
You love me!" "Nay, I was awhile afraid,
Being so white and tender; for a maid
I lived alone with flower and brook, nor guessed
Another dwelt within the quiet nest

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That these woods build me; hold my trembling
hand,
Teach me to love; I do not understand."
He clasped her to him, but no word might say,
And led her from the pool a little way,
And there he laid her on the flowery mead,
And watched her weeping. His forgotten reed
Floated away, a ship for fairy folk,
Along the limpid rivulet. Then broke
From smitten heart and ravished lips the tongue
Of fire that clad its essence with the robe of song.

Song of Charicles

O fountains of pale sapphire, and clear green,
O hills of purple, and ye olive vales,
Bring music to my song, and echo seen
Of no man bring, for now my spirit fails
To shrill its clearest notes, and golden gales
Of sound, and breezes of delighted sighs,
Bring music, hear me chant the world that is,
And how Love's ambush in all nature lies,
And I will tell how for one eager kiss
My soul is fain to forget Paradise
In Archais.

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The lily lifts her pallid lips
  To the fierce passion of the sky,
The bee from rose and violet sips
Sweet honey, and the ivy clips
The oak, the wanton streamlet slips
  Darkly away and shy,
The green-leaved trees for passion swoon,
  When spring's light kisses shake and sigh
Amid the glances of the moon,
While o'er their brethren fallen or hewn
They wave in melancholy tune
  Their branches mournfully.

Man's days are dim, his deeds are dust,
  His span is but a little space,
He lusts to live, he lives to lust,
His soul is barren of love or trust,
His heart is hopeless, seeing he must
  Perish, and leave no trace;
With impious rage he mocks the bounds
  Of earth, albeit so wholly base;
His ears are dead to subtle sounds,
His eyes are blind, for Zeus confounds
His vain irreverence, and astounds
  High Heaven with wrathful face.

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But I am born of gods, and turn
  My eyes to thee, thyself divine.
My vigorous heart and spirit yearn
With love, my cheeks with passion burn—
As thy clear eyes may well discern
  By gazing into mine.
Thy heart is cool, thy cheeks are pale,
  Nor blush with shame like winter wine
To understand my amorous tale,
For words and looks of Love must fail
To touch thee, since a snowy veil
  Is 'twixt my mind and thine.

Dear goddess, at whose early breast
  I drank in all desires and woes;
Most reverend god, who oft caressed
Her pale chaste wifehood, and who pressed
Upon my forehead kisses blest;
  Bid blossom out this rose,
This fair white bud whose heart is pure,
  Whose bosom fears not, neither knows
The long vague mysteries that endure
Of life uncertain, of love sure,
Teach her the mystic overture
  To Love's transcendant throes.

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He ceased : but out of Heaven no sound of might,
No tongue of flame gave answer. Still as night,
Silence and sunlight, stream and mead, possessed
The whole wide world. The maid's reluctant breast
Heaved with soft passion nowise understood,
And her pulse quickened. Through the quiet wood
Her answer rang: "My voice with thine shall break
The woodland stillness, for the fountain's sake.
I'll sing thee—Lamia! mother, I obey!"
In vain the desperate boy pursued the way
With awful eyes, no bruiséd flower betrayed
The tender footsteps of a goddess maid;
No butterfly flew frightened; on the pool
No ripple spoke of her; the streamlet cool
Had no small wreath of amber mist to mark
Her flight; she was not there, the silver spark
Had flashed and faded, all the field was bare,
No wave of wing bestirred the sultry air,
Save only where the noontide lark rose high
To chant his liberty. The vaulted sky
Was one blue cupola of rare turquoise
That shimmered with the heat.

His pulses pause

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For his despair ineffable. Her name
He called; she was not, and the piercing flame
Of love struck through him, till his tortured mind
Drove his young limbs, the wolf that hunts the
hind,
Far through the forest. Lastly sleep, like death,
With strong compulsion of his labouring breath
Came on him dreamless.
When he woke, the day
Stooped toward the splendour of the western bay,
And he remembered. Like a wild bird's cry
The song within him flamed, a melody
Dreadful and beautiful. The sad sea heard
And echoed over earth its bitter word.

Song

Ere the grape of joy is golden
With the summer and the sun,
Ere the maidens unbeholden
Gather one by one,
To the vineyard comes the shower,
No sweet rain to fresh the flower,
But the thunder rain that cleaves,
Rends and ruins tender leaves.

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Ere the wine of perfect pleasure
  From a perfect chalice poured,
Swells the veins with such a measure
  As the garden's lord
Makes his votaries dance to, death
Draws with soft delicious breath
  To the maiden and the man.
  Love and life are both a span.

Ere the crimson lips have planted
  Paler roses, warmer grapes,
Ere the maiden breasts have panted,
  And the sunny shapes
Flit around to bless the hour,
Comes men know not what false flower:
  Ere the cup is drained, the wine
  Grows unsweet, that was divine.

All the subtle airs are proven
  False at dewfall, at the dawn
Sin and sorrow, interwoven,
  Like a veil are drawn
Over love and all delight,
Grey desires invade the white.
  Love and life are but a span;
  Woe is me! and woe is man!

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The sound stood trembling in the forest dim
Lingering a little, yet there taketh him
A strong man's one short moment of despair.
He fell, the last of Titans, his loose hair
Tangled in roses; while his heart and mind
Broken and yet imperishable, blind,
Hateful, desire they know not what, and turn
Lastly to pray for death; his wild eyes burn,
And bitter tears divide his doubtful breath.
So grew his anguish to accomplish death,
Had not the goddess with the rosy shoon
Stooped o'er the silver surface of the moon
To touch his brow with slumber, like a kiss
Whose dreams perfused the name of Archais,
Till the sweet odour dulled his brain, and sleep
Loosened his limbs, most dreamless and most
deep.
The mosses serve him for a bed; the trees
Wave in the moonlight, daughters of the breeze;
Hardly the pleasant waters seem to shake,
And only nightingales, for slumber's sake,
Lull the soft stars and seas, and matchless music
make.

And now the sun is risen above the deep,

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The mists pass slowly on the uplands steep,
Far snows are luminous with rosy flecks
Of lambent light, and shadow tints and decks
Their distant hollows with black radiance,
While the delivered fountains flash and glance
Adown the hills and through the woods of pine
And stately larch, with cadences divine
And trills and melodies instinct with light and
wine.

The sun, arising, sees the sleeping youth,
And lumes his locks with evanescent gold,
While birds and breezes, watching, hold them
mute,
And light and silence, the twin-born of truth,
Reign o'er the meadow, and possess the wold.
The poet bows his head, and lays aside his lute.

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PART II

WHEN God bethought Him, and the world began,
He made moist clay, and breathed on it, that man
Might be most frail and feeble, and like earth
Shrink at Death's finger from the hour of birth ;
And like the sea by limits of pale sand
Be utterly confined ; but so He planned
To vivify the body with the soul,
That fire and air were wedded to control
The heavy bulk beneath them, so His breath
Touched the warm clay and violated death,
Gave to the spirit wings and bade it rise
To seek its Maker with aspiring eyes,
Gave to the body strength to hold awhile
The spirit, till the passions that defile
Should waste and wither, and the free soul soar.
But evil lusted with the soul, and bore
A thousand children deadlier than death ;
The sin that enters with the eager breath

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Of perfect love; the sin that seeks its home
In lights and longings frailer than the foam;
The sin that loves the hollows of the night,
The sin that fears; the sin that hates the light;
The sin that looks with wistful eyes; the sin
That trembles on the olive of the skin;
The sin that slumbers; these divide the day
And all the darkness, and deceive, and slay.
And these regather in the womb of hell
To marry and increase, and by the spell
Of their own wickedness discover sin
Unguessed at, by slow treason creeping in,
To spread corruption, and destroy the earth.
But in the holy hour and happy birth
That swam through stars propitious, meadows white,
And fresh with newer flowers of the night
In the pale fields supernal, when his sire
Took from the nurse the child of his desire,
A man, the prayers of many maidens sent
So sweet a savour through the firmament
That no false spirit might draw nigh. And still
His angel ministers defend from ill
The head they nurtured. Evil dreams and spells,
Cast at the dimmest hour, the sword repels

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And drives them down the steep of Hell. But dim
Sweet faces of dead maidens drew to him ;
Quiet woods and streams and all the mountains tall,
Cool valleys, silver-streaked with waterfall,
Came in his slumbers, chaste and musical,
While through their maze his mind beheld afar
Dim and divine, Archais, like a star.

It was no dream, or else the growing dawn
Deepened the glory of the misted lawn,
For to his eyes, half open now, there seems
A figure, fairer than his dearest dreams.
He sprang, he caught her to his breast, the maid
Smiled and lay back to look at him. He laid
Her tender body on the sloping field,
And felt her sighs in his embraces yield
A sweeter music than all birds. But she,
Lost in the love she might not know, may see
No further than his face, and yet, aware
Of her own fate, resisted like a snare
Her own soft wishes. As she looked and saw
His eager face, the iron rod of law

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Grew like a misty pillar in the sky,
In all her veins the blood's desires die,
And then—O sudden ardour—all her mind
And memory faded, and looked outward, blind,
Beyond their bitterness. Her arms she flung
Around him, and with amorous lips and tongue
Tortured his palate with extreme desire,
And like a Mænad maddened; equal fire
Leapt in his veins; locked close for love they lie,
The heart's dumb word exprest without a sigh
In the strong magic of a lover's kiss,
And the twin light of love; but Archais
Felt through her blood a sudden chill; her face
Blanched and besought a moment's breathing space;
Her heart's desire welled up, and then again
Whitened her cheeks with the exceeding pain
Of uttermost despair. At last her strength
Failed, and she flung her weary body at length
Amid the bruiséd flowers; while from her eyes
Surged the salt tears; low moans she multiplies
Because her love is blasphemous; the wind
Sighs for all answer, sobs and wails behind
Among the trees; the stream grows deadly pale
Hearing her weep, and like a silver sail

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The fading moon drifts sorrowful above.
Then Charicles must ask his weeping love
To lead him to the fountain of her tears.
But she, possessed by vague and violent fears,
Spake not a little while, and then began:
"O thou, a child of Heaven, and a man,
Even so my lover, shall my woeful song
So move thy spirit for my bitter wrong
(God-nurtured though thou be) against the rods
Laid on me by my mother, whom the gods,
Righteous in anger, doomed, for fiery sin
Kindled by hell-flames, cherishéd within
Her lustful heart, for sin most damnable,
To suffer torment in remotest hell,
Where the grim fiend grinds down with fiery stones
The unrepentant marrow of men's bones,
Or chills their blood with poisonous vials of death,
Or dooms them to the tooth and venomous breath
Of foul black worms; and on the earth to dwell
For a long space, and there (most terrible!)
To change her shape at times, and on her take
The fierce presentment of a loathly snake

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To wander curst and lonely through the dire
black brake.
And this thing is my mother, whose foul tomb
Is a black serpent, spotted with the gloom
Of venomous red flecks, and poisonous sweat,
While on her flat lewd head the mark is set
Of utter loathsomeness; and I, her child
Born of incestuous lust, and sore defiled
With evil parentage, am now (Most just
Unpitying Zeus!) condemned with her, I must
The hated semblance of a serpent wear
When noon rides forth upon the crystal air."
While yet she spake, the dwindling shadow
ran
Beneath the feet of Charicles, the wan
Waste water glinted free, and to the deep
Cool pebbles did the kiss of sunshine creep;
The busy lark forgot for joy to sing,
And all the woods with fairy voices ring;
The hills in dreamy languor seem to swoon
Through the blue haze! behold, the hour of
noon!

And lo! there came to pass the dreadful fate
Her lips had shuddered out; her pulses bate

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Their quick sweet movement; on the ground she
lies
Struggling, and rending Heaven with her cries.
Like light, in one convulsive pang the snake
Leapt in the sunlight, and its body brake
With glistening scales that golden skin of hers,
And writhing with pure shame, the long grass
whirrs
With her sharp flight of fury and despair.
Then Charicles at last became aware
Of the fell death that had him by the throat
To mar his music; like one blind he smote
The quivering air with cries of sorrow; then,
Disdaining fear and sorrow, cried to men
And gods to help him; then, resolved to dare
All wrath and justice, he rose up to swear;
Lifting his right hand to the sky, that glowed
Deadly vermilion, like the poisonous toad
That darts an angry red from out its eye,
By sword and spear, by maze and mystery,
By Zeus' high house, and by his godhead great,
By his own soul, no ardour to abate
Until he freed Archais. Like a star
Rebellious, thrust beyond the morning's bar,
Erect, sublime, he swore so fierce an oath

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That the sea flashed with blasphemy, and loath
Black thunder broke from out the shuddering deep.
He swore again, and from its century's sleep
Earthquake arose, and rocked and raved and roared.
He swore the third time. But that Heaven's Lord
Curbed their black wrath, the stars of Heaven's vault
Had rushed to 'whelm the sun with vehement assault.

The heavens stood still, but o'er the quaking earth,
That groaned and shrank with the untimely birth
Of fury and freedom, Charicles strode on
With fervid foot, to Aphrodite's throne
In seagirt Paphos, to exact her aid—
The sun stood still, creation grew afraid
At his firm step and mien erect and undismayed.

Strident the godlike hero called aloud,
Blaspheming, while that sombre bank of cloud

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Witnessed the wrath of Zeus; the thunder broke
From purple flashes vanished into smoke
That rolled unceasingly through heaven; the youth
Cried out against high Zeus, "The cause of Truth,
Freedom, and Justice!" and withal strode on
To the vast margin of the waters wan
That barred him from his goal; his cloak he stripped,
And in the waves his sudden body dipped,
And with his strenuous hands the emerald water gripped.

Long had he struggled (for Poseidon's hand
Heaped foam against him) toward the seemly strand,
But that Love's Mother, journeying from Rome,
Passed in her car the swimmer, while her home
Scarce yet was glimmering o'er the waste wide sea,
Against whose wrath he strove so silently;
Whom now beholding, checked her eager team,
Dipped to the foam from which she sprang, whose gleam
Bore the sweet mirage of her eyes, and bent

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Over the weary Charicles. Content
With him she spake, and he, still buffeting
The waves, looked never up, but with the swing
Of strong fierce limbs, clove through the water
gray.
Hearing her voice, he answered, "Ere the day
Has fallen from his pinnacle must I
Reach sea-girt Paphos, with a bitter cry
To clasp the knees of Cytherea, and pray
That she will aid me." Then the billows lay
Fondly quiescent while she answered him:
"Yea, are thine eyes with weeping grown so dim
Thou canst not see who hovers over thee?
For I am she thou seekest. Come with me
And tell me all thy grief; thy prayer is heard
Before thy spirit clothes in wintry word
The fire it throbs with." And her eager doves
Waited. From seas grown calm the wanton
loves
Lifted the hero to the pearly car,
Whose floor was azure and whose front a star
Set in seven jewels girt with ivory.

Then the light rein the goddess left to lie
Unheeded, and the birds flew on apace,

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Until the glint and glory of the place
Grew o'er the blue dim line of ocean.
It was a temple never built of man,
Being of marble white, and all unhewn,
Above a cliff, about whose base were strewn
Boulders of amethyst or malachite.
Save these the cliffs rose sheer, a dazzling white,
Six hundred feet from ocean; so divine
Was the tall precipice, that from the shrine
A child might fling a stone and splash it in the
brine.
Within whose silver courts and lily bowers
The Queen of Love led Charicles; white flowers
Blushed everywhere to scarlet, as her feet,
Themselves more white, did touch them. On a
seat,
White with strewn rose, and leaves of silver birch
Remote from courts profane, and vulgar search,
They rested, till the hero's tale was told.
Then Aphrodite loosed a snake of gold
From her arm's whiteness, and upon his wrist
Clasped it. Its glittering eyes of amethyst
Fascinate him. "Even so," the goddess cried,
"I will bind on thy arm the serpent bride
Free from her fate, and promise by this kiss

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The warmer kissess of thy Archais."
She spake, and on his brow, betwixt her hands
Pressed softly, as a maid in bridal bands,
Kissed him, her first chaste kiss. Then Charicles
Gave her due thanks, and bent his ear to seize
Her further words. And she: "Not many days
Shall flame and flicker into darkened ways
Before the wings of night, ere Hermes fly
Hither, the messenger of Zeus. But I
Bid thee remain beneath the temple gate
While I consider of our war on Fate.
Till then, and I will tell thee everything
That thou must do; but now let song take wing
Till the pale air swoon with the deep delight
That makes cool noontide from the sultry night.
What are your dreams, my maidens? Your young dreams?
Are they of passion, or of rocks and streams,
Of purple mountains, clad about with green,
Or do their lamps grow dim in the unseen?
Sing to this hero; sing, lure slumber to your queen."

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Song of Aphrodite's Handmaidens

My dreams are sweet, because my heart is free
  Because our locks still mingle and lips meet,
Because thine arms still hold me tenderly,
  My dreams are sweet.

Visions of waters rippling by my feet,
  Trees that re-weave their branches lovingly,
Birds that pass passionate on pinions fleet:

Such quiet joys my eyes in slumber see—
  Let death's keen sickle wander through the
    wheat!
I love not life o'ermuch; since loving thee
  My dreams are sweet.

Sing, little bird, it is dawn;
  Chant, with the day the woods ring;
Now in the blush of the morn
    Sing!

Love doth enchain me and cling,
  Love, of the breeze that is born,
Love, with the breeze that takes wing,

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Love that is lighter than scorn,
  Love, that is strong as a king,
Love, through the gate that is horn,
        Sing!

Then Charicles rejoicing quickly ran
And chose a lyre, and thus his song began
Rippling through melodies unheard of man.

Song of Charicles

Wake, fairy maid, for the day
  Blushes our curtain to shake;
Summer and blossoms of May
        Wake!

Lilies drink light on the lake,
  Laughter drives dreamland away,
Kisses shall woo thee, and slake

Passion with amorous play,
  Clip thee and love, for Love's sake.
Wake and caress me, I pray,
        Wake!

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Snow-hills and streams, dew-diamonded,
  Call us from silvery dreams
To where the morning kindles red
  Snow-hills and streams.

See, breezes whisper, sunlight gleams
  With gentle kissings; flowers shed
Pale scents, the whole sweet meadow steams.

Forth, glittering shoulders, golden head,
  And tune our lutes to tender themes
Among the lost loves of the dead,
  Snow-hills and streams.

The queen clapped dainty hands, caressed of dew,
And bade the love-lorn wanderer sing anew.
His muse came trembling, soon through starry
  air it flew.

Song of Charicles

Within the forest gloom
  There lies a lover's bower,
    A lotus flower
      In bloom.

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O lotus-flower too white,
Starred purple, round and sweet,
Rich golden wheat
Of night.

I'll kiss thee, lotus-flower,
I'll pluck thee, yellow grain,
Once and again
This hour.

There coos a dove to me
Across the waves of space;
O passionate face
To see!

I'll woo thee. silver dove,
Caress thee, lotus-flower;
It is the hour
Of Love.

Cypris blushed deep; albeit for love did swoon
At the song's sweetness, while the cold dead moon
Was still and pale; her nymphs are fain to sigh
With sudden longing filled, and like to die
For vain delight, for still across the sea
Stole sensuous breaths of Sapphic melody

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From the far strand of Lesbos; then there came
Into their eyes a new and awful flame
Suddenly burning; now upon the beach
The waves kept tune in unexpressive speech
As the sad voice drew nigh; the hero shrank
Like one in awe; the flame shot up and sank
From the crimson-vestured altar; then the song
Found in the wavering breeze from over sea a
tongue.

Here, on the crimson strand of blood-red waters,
We, Cypris, not thy daughters,
Clad in bright flame, filled with unholy wine,
O Cypris, none of thine!—

Here, kissing in the dim red dusk, we linger,
Striking with amorous finger
Our lyres, whose fierce delights are all divine—
O Cypris, none of thine!

Quenchless, insatiable, the unholy fire
Floods our red lips' desire;
Our kisses sting, as barren as the brine—
O Cypris, none of thine!

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Our songs are awful, that the heavens shrink back
  Into their void of black.
We worship at a sad insatiate shrine—
  O Cypris, none of thine!

Scarcely the song did cease when out of heaven
A little cloud drew near, all thunder-riven,
Scarred by the lightning, torn of ravaging wind;
Upon it sate the herald, who should find
The home of Aphrodite, and should bring
A message from high Zeus. The mighty king
Had bidden him to speed. His wings drew nigh
And hushed the last faint echoed melody
With silver waving. As the messenger
Of mighty Zeus descending unto her
He stood before her, and called loud her name.
Wrapped in a cloud of amber-scented flame
Befitting his high office; but his word,
Too terrible for mortals, passed unheard
To Cypris' ear alone. She bowed her head
And bade her nymphs prepare a royal bed
Where he should rest awhile; and, being gone,
Cypris and Charicles were left alone.
An aureole of purple round her brow

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Flames love no more, but fierce defiance now
Knotted the veins, suffused them with rich blood,
And wrath restrained from sight the torrid flood
Of tears; her eyes were terrible; she spake:
"Rise for thy life, and flee. Arise, awake,
And hide thee in the temple; Zeus hath spoken
To me—me, Queen of Love—O sceptre broken!—
O vainest of all realms! that thou must die.
This only chance is left thee yet, to fly
Within that sanctity even he not dares
To touch with impious hand; thus unawares
Creep in among the columns to a gate
My hand shall show thee; it will open straight
And thou must lie forgotten till his rage
Have lost its first excess—then may we wage
A more successful war against his power."
But Charicles: "Shall I for one short hour
Fly from his tyranny? Am I such man
As should flee from him? Let the pale and wan
Women have fear—in strength of justice, I
His vain fierce fury do this hour defy!"
There shot through Heaven an awful tongue of fire,
Attended by its minister, the dire
Black thunder. In clear accents, cold and chill,

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There sounded : " Boldest mortal, have thy will !
I do reverse the doom of Archais
And lay it on thyself; nor ever this
Shall lift its curse from off thee, this I swear."
And Cypris looked upon him and was ware
His form did change, and, writhing from her clasp,
Fled hissing outward, a more hateful asp
Than India breeds to-day, so terrible
Was his despair, so venomous as hell
The sudden hate that filled him. So away
Knowing not whither, did he flee, till day
Dropped her blue pinions, and the night drew on,
And sable clouds banked out the weary sun.

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PART III

LONG days and nights succeeded in despair.
Each noon beheld his doom—too proud for prayer,
And scorning Aphrodite's help—he strayed
Through swamps and weary bogs, nor yet betrayed
His anguished countenance to mortal men.
There was so keen an hour of sorrow, when
He had destroyed himself; but Heaven's hand,
Stretched out in vengeance, held him back. The land,
Where rest is made eternal, slipped his clutch;
He wandered through the world and might not touch
The sceptre of King Death. In vain he sought
Those fierce embraces, nor availed him aught
To numb the aching of his breast. The maid
He loved, now freed from doom, no longer prayed

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For anything but to discover him,
And her large eyes with weeping grew more dim
Than are the mists of Autumn on the hills.
She sought him far and near; the rocks and rills
Could tell her nought; the murmur of the trees
Told her their pity and no more; the breeze
That cooled its burning locks within the sea,
And dared not pass o'er the dank swamps where he
Was hid, knew nothing; nor the soughing waves,
Through all the desolation of those caves
The sea-nymphs haunt, could say a word of him;
No stars, to whom she looked, had seen the grim
Abodes of Charicles, for deadly shade
Lowered o'er their top, nor any light betrayed
The horror of their core. Despairing then
Of nature's prophets, and of gods and men,
She cast her arms wide open to the sky,
Cried loud, and wept, and girt herself to die.

It was a pinnacle of ivory
Whereon she stood, the loftiest of three fangs

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Thrust up by magic, in the direst pangs
Of Earth, when Earth was yet a whirling cloud
Of fire and adamant, a ceaseless crowd
Of rushing atoms roaring into space,
Driven by demons from before the Face.
And these gleamed white, while Helios lit the heaven,
Like tusks; but at the coming of the even
Were visions wonderful with indigo;
And in the glory of the afterglow
Were rosy with its kiss; and in the night
Were crowned with that unutterable light
That is a brilliance of solemn black,
Glistening wide across the ocean track
Of white-sailed ships and many mariners.
So, on the tallest spire, where wakes and whirrs
The eagle when dawn strikes his eyrie, came
The maiden, clad in the abundant flame
Of setting sun, with shapely shoulders bare,
And even the glory of her midday hair
Was bound above her head; so, naked pure,
Fixed in that purpose, which the gods endure
With calm despair, the purpose to be passed
Into the circle, that, serene and vast,
Girds all, and is itself the All—to die—

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So stood she there, with eyes of victory
Fixed on the sun, about to sink his rays
Beneath the ocean, that the pallid bays
Fringed with white foam. But, as in pity, yet
The sun forgot his chariot, nor would set,
Since as he sank the maiden thought to leap
Within the bosom of the vaulted deep
From that high pedestal. And seeing this,
That yet an hour was left her, Archais
Lift up her voice and prayed with zeal divine
To Aphrodite, who from her far shrine
Heard and flew fast to aid over the night-clad
brine.

Prayer of Archais

O Mother of Love,
By whom the earth and all its fountains move
In harmony,
Hear thou the bitter overwhelming cry
Of me, who love, who am about to die
Because of love.

O Queenliest Shrine,
Keeper of keys of heaven, most divine
Yet Queen of Pain,

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Since Hell's gates open, and close fast again
Behind some servants of thy barren and vain
Though queenliest shrine.

I am of those
Who hear their brazen clanging as they close
Fast ward on life,
I wane to-night, wearied with endless strife,
A lover alway, never yet a wife,
Lost in love's woes.

O bitter doom!
Fierce love flames up, then sinks in eddying gloom
Across the waves
Whose awful stillnesses are lovers' graves,
Who chant in fearful melody the staves
Of bitter doom.—

Not unperceived of Cypris did her song
Die fitfully upon her tremulous tongue,
Nor fell the melody on cruel ears:
The bright-throat goddess sped through many spheres
Of sight, beyond the world, and flamed across
All space, on wings that not the albatross

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Might match for splendour, stretch, or airy speed,
From cluster unto cluster at her need
Of stars, wide waving, and from star to star
Extended, in whose span the heavens are.
So came she to the maiden, and unseen
Gazed on her wrapt. So sighed the amorous queen,
"For her indeed might Charicles despair!"
Yet of her presence was the maiden 'ware,
Although her mortal eyes might see her not;
So she knelt down upon that holy spot
And greeted her with tears; for now at last
The fountains of her sorrow, vague and vast,
Burst from the strong inexorable chain
Of too great passion, and a mortal pain
Beyond belief, and so in sudden waves
Tears welled impatient from their crystal caves.
(Men say those barren pinnacles are set
Since then with jewels; the white violet
Was born of those pure tears; the snowdrop grew
Where wakening hope her agony shot through,
And where the Queen of Love had touched her tears,
The new-born lily evermore appears.)

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So Cypris comforts her with tender words
That pierce her bosom, like dividing swords,
With hopes and loves re-quickened, and her
breath
Grew calm as worship's, though as dark as death
Her soul had been for weary days no few ;
Now, lightened by the spirit thrust anew
As into a dead body breath of life,
She gave sweet thanks with gentle lips that ope,
Like buds of roses on the sunny slope
Of lily gardens falling toward a stream
That flashes back the intolerable beam
Of sunlight with light heart.

They fled away
At Cypris' word, beyond the bounds of day
Into the awful caverns of the night,
Eerie with ghosts imagined, and the might
Of strange spells cast upon them by the dead.
So, ere the dying autumn-tide was fled,
There, in a lonely cleft of riven rock,
Whose iron fastnesses disdain and mock
Fury and fire with impassivity,
Archais rested, there alone must she
Wait the event of Aphrodite's wiles.

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There, like a statue, 'mid the massy piles
Of thunder-smitten stone, as motionless
As Fate she sat, in manifold distress,
Awaiting and awaiting aye the same
One strong desire of life, that never came ;
And made a song, so passionate, the cave
Told its dear secret to the clinging wave
As she sang thus. The sky a solemn echo gave.

Song of Archais

O Kill me with the Purple of Your Mouth!
  And Slay me with the Gold of Your Forehead!
And bring me with you to the swarthy south!
  And bury me in your desire's bed!
Mine you shall be in life, in death, in dream,
Mine in the years that are, and those that seem;
  One with my essence, as your lips absorb
My breath, and make it breezes for your bed,
  And all my body, to fill full the orb
Of golden splendour of your royal head.
  King of my life and crown of my desire,
  King of all death when life's last lips expire;
Mine, in the straitest wedlock rightly wed,
  Till God be pleased to kindle us a pyre.

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King of my dainty slumbers, and the days
That troop like maidens crowned with ivy leaves;
Mine, through the azure and candescent haze
Of far cool mountain caves; mine, o'er the eaves
Of windswept ridges of pure snow; still mine
While space is fixed, a void and varying steep,
Between our kisses, and another stream
Than this old reedy pool, whose waters steam
Chill exhalations like a corpse asleep,
Meanders from Eternity along,
While days fierce-fanged hunt down my love and thine,
And urge us to the thickets that forget,
And the chill mountains of unlovely song,
And the false quags where jealousy lives yet,
Or the ill rivers at whose restless shrine
Men offer incense to new gods, and wrong
The deity they loved, the dear divine
Body and breath of Love's own avatar.
They hunt our love from sea to sea, they set
Cold fettters on our limbs that would beget

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Fair children in a world diviner far
Than that unspeakable desirous star
Like a blue diamond flaming in the void,
Jewelled with satellite and asteroid,
Where our desire is welcome. Yea, the night
Holds in her bosom such a world of light
As in this sick sad Earth would consume man
With its quick blaze of truth. Thy bitter ban,
Zeus, shall most utterly be made to cease.
We must fight Fate and conquer it. Our peace,
Our passion, is the silent answer given
To the importunate questioning of heaven.
Thou art supreme, my king, and I in thee;
  We have life hard by its chill throat, to choke
Its petty gasping pleasures, and to see
  The ancient altars with new incense smoke:
We are supreme to watch the universe
Waiting to crash together at the curse
  Of God let drop upon it like the light,
In one sharp agony of glory, spent
  Through the thick misty æther, when the night
Slips her loose robe from sea and continent.
  Calm, and suspiring thinner air than these,
  We are alone to linger at our ease

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In a cool peace beyond imagining,
  Where not a tender wind disturbs the frost,
And not a dove spreads out a silver wing,
  And silence' self in silence' self is lost,
And our lips touch without a sound or sigh,
And our lips dwell on either, you and I,
  Alone, above, my king! where our hearts beat,
Beat close together, silently and low,
  And your rose feet desire my silver feet,
And your arms meet and hold me ever—so.
  You must remember when with feet of fire
The New Moon flamed upon the crystal night,
  And your desire was touched of my desire,
And both grew one delirious delight
  And I was made your wife for ever—so.
  How you lay close to me, your head quite low
In the warm pillow where my head had lain,
And I, as a young heifer newly slain,
  With soft tears wept and waited for your kiss,
And knew the exquisite delight of pain
  Borne for love's sake—so lazily as this
For ever, with your eyelids' silver rain
  Freshing my soul with unimagined showers.

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O dear Uranian night! O happy hours!
Will they be long returning on their track?
Will my gold mane grow grey and know them not?
Will my heart's fibres long endure the rack
That tears them now—the fear I am forgot?
Nay, but I fear not: I well know your lips
Yearn over moor and marsh for me, your hand
Misses no moment but its marble slips
In your bright tunic, as the little ships
That seek a harbour by some rocky strand,
To take your pipe, and play at love's demand
Some tender song I sung you long ago
To lume again some first sweet maiden glow
Of shy desire that knew not all it said.
Will the days lengthen for sheer weariness?
Will they pursue us till they strike us dead?
Or will our love put on a spring-time dress
And burn and bloom and burgeon into leaf,
And rose-leaves cover quite the urn of grief?
Yes, you shall call me to your side, to speed
Fast as love ever flies, to yonder south,
Where my young bosom shall be taught to bleed,

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And my young lips to blow upon a reed,
  And my young body to assuage your drouth,
And you shall sing that sacred orison,
Sing, as that midnight when we wrought as one,
When in one bed our bodies met at last
And all the future kissed the dying past—
  O Kill me with the Purple of Your Mouth!

For Aphrodite sought in vain the woods,
The silent mountains, and impetuous floods
In all the world, nor had she knowledge of
Such dens as him concealed; (for what should
    Love
Know of such vile morasses?) in despair
Waved angry wings, and, floating through the air,
Came unto Aphaca, lewd citadel
Of strange new lusts and devilries of hell,
Where god Priapus dwelt; to him she came—
She, Love!—and, hiding her fair face for shame,
Nor showing aught the quivering scorn that
    glowed
Through all her body, her desire showed
In brief sharp words, and the lewd god gave ear
(For he shook terribly with bastard fear

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Of being cast beneath the hoof of Time)
And answered her: "O mightiest, O sublime
White deity of heaven, a swamp is known
To me, so vile, so more than venomous grown
With filthy weeds; yea, all lewd creatures swarm
Its airless desolation through; and warm
Sick vapours of disease do putrefy
Its feverish exhalations; yet do I
With some fond band of loyal worshippers
Often draw thither; and black ministers
Of mine therein do office; I have seen
This being cursed of Zeus, a snake unclean
With its unholy neighbourhood; at morn
A fair bright youth, whose large eyes well might scorn
The wanton eyes of Ganymede, whose tongue
Reiterates ill curses idly strung
In circles meaningless high Zeus to move,
Yet has twain other cries; the one is "Love!"
The other "Archais!" The Paphian lips
Smiled with a splendour potent to eclipse
The large-lipped drawn-out grinning of that court
That mouthed and gibbered in their swinish sport,

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And with meet words of gratitude the dame
That rules our lives withdrew, triumphant flame
Kindling in her bright eyes and sunwarmed hair,
Burning in dawny cheeks as the fresh air
Kissed, cleansing them from that infested den
Of obscene deities and apish men,
Rivalling their gods in petty filthiness.
So Love's white-bosomed Queen gat full success
In the first season of her sojourning.

Then, on the verge of night, she went a-wing
To that most damnèd pestilence-rid marsh,
And, changing her bright shape, she donned the harsh
Vile form of woman past the middle age,
Who hath not virtue that may charm the sage
When the desire of folly is gone by,
And wrinkles yield to no false alchemy.
So, lewd of countenance, dressed all in rags,
She waited, fit mate of hell's filthiest hags,
Within a little hut upon the marge
Extreme of that bad swamp, whereby a barge,
Rotted with years and pestilence, lay moored.
The rusty chain men meant to have secured

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Its most unwieldy hulk was eaten through
Of sharp-tongued serpents, and the poisonous dew
That the foul damp let fall at evening
Rotted it even to its core. A ring
Of silver girt it to the landing-stage,
Yet brimstone joined in wedlock with foul age
To burn into its vitals; thus the breath
Of Satyrs wantoning at noon with Death
Strained it, and all but cast it loose; the night
Drew on the outer world; no change of light
Was known within those depths, but vermin knew
By some strange instinct; forth the unholy crew
Of vampires and swamp-adders drew them out.
Alone amid the pestilential rout
Charicles' crest did glimmer red with wrath,
And, stealing from the barge, he drew him forth
And writhed into the hut, for latterly
So dark his soul had grown that never he
For shame and sorrow wore the form of man.
So to the hut on writhing coils he ran
With angry head erect, and passed within
Its rotten doorway. Then the thing of Sin
That mocked the name of woman fondled him,

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Stroked his flat head, his body curved and slim,
And from the fire brought milk. He drank it up
From the coarse pewter of the borrowed cup
And cried: "In eating, swear. I have vowed to make
The gods infernal on their couches quake
With fear before I die; I have vowed to live
With one aim only; never to forgive
The wrong the gods do me, and in my form
Love his high self, by whom the earth is warm
To-day, by whose defiance the universe
Would crash in one inextricable curse
To primal chaos. Hear me, I have sworn."
Then, suddenly, more glorious than the morn
Tipping the golden tops of autumn hills
With light, more countless than the myriad rills
Of bright dew running off the bracken leaves,
With gold more saturated than the sheaves
In the red glow that promises the day
Shall glory when the night is fled away
In bonds, a captive; so more glorious
Than the supreme ideal dreams of us
Mortals, he sprang forth suddenly a man.
Wherefore the hag, triumphant, then began

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Likewise to change. The writhled visage grew
Fouler and fiercer, blacker in its hue ;
The skewed deformities became more vile,
The rags more rotten, till a little while,
And all was changed to a putrescent heap
Of oily liquid on the floor asleep,
Like poisonous potency of mandragore
Ready to strike. And then a change came o'er
Its turbid mass, that shook, and grew divine,
A million-twinkling ocean of bright brine
That seemed to spread beyond the horizon,
Whence, stirred by strange emotions of the sun,
Waves rolled upon it, and a wind arose
And lashed it with insatiable blows
Into a surging labyrinth of foam,
Boiling up into heaven's unchanging dome
Of brightest æther ; then, its womb uncloses
To bring to birth a garden of white roses,
Whence, on a mystic shell of pearl, is borne
A goddess, bosomed like the sea at morn,
Glittering in all the goodlihead and grace
Of maiden magic ; her delicious face
Grew more and more upon the hero's sight,
Till all the hut was filled with rosy light,

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And Charicles' grey eyes were luminous
With love-reflections multitudinous
As lilies in the spring. Again was seen
As in a mirror, like the ocean green,
The admirable birth of Love's eternal Queen.

So Charicles a moment was amazed.
A moment; then, contemptuous, he gazed
With curling lip on her, and sourly scorns
Her petty miracle: "The deed adorns
Too well a queen whose promises are foam."
And she, indignant, would have hied her home
And left him to despair, but pitying
His soul struck through with darts: "A bitter thing"
(She cried) "thou sayest, yet perchance my power
Is not as great as thine, for while I cower
Under the lash of Zeus, stand thou upright,
And laugh him to his beard for all his spite."
"I, even now beneath his doom?" "Even thou!
For learn this law, writ large upon the brow
Of white Olympus, writ by him who made
Thee, yea and Zeus, of whom is Zeus afraid

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Graven by Him with an eternal pen,
The first law in the destiny of men :
He whom Zeus wrongfully once injures may not be
Hurt by his power again in the most small degree."
" Thus, thy Archais "—" Mine ! ah nevermore ! "
" Peace, doubter !—is made free from all the sore
Oppressions of the past, nor may again
Zeus lay on her the shadow of a pain."
" But I, but I "—" Yea, verily, fear not
But stratagem may lift thy bitter lot
From thy worn shoulders. Thus for half the day
Thou art as free as air, as woodland fay
Treading the circle of unearthly green,
By maiden eyes at summer midnight seen.
These hours of freedom thou may'st use to free
Love from his toils, and joy and goodly gree
Shall be thy guerdon. Listen ! I have power
To change thy semblance in thy happier hour ;
Thou shalt assume the countenance of Love's
Divinest maiden in the darkling groves
Of Ida. There shalt thou meet happily
With Zeus himself. I leave the scheme to thee."

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The flash of her desire within his brain
Came as a meteor through the wildered train
Of solemn spheres of night's majestic court.
He kissed the extended hand, and lastly sought
A blessing from the kindly Queen of Love.
Then, smiling, she was bountiful thereof,
And bade him haste away, when at the gate—
Twin witch-oaks that presided o'er the state
Of that detested realm—he felt a change,
Half pleasant, only beyond wonder strange,
A change as from a joy to a delight,
As from broad sunshine to the fall of night,
As from strong action to endurance strong,
As from desire to the power to long,
From man to woman with a strange swift motion,
Like tide and ebb upon a summer ocean.
Thus he went forth a girl ; his steps he presses
Through sickly wastes and burning wildernesses
To the lascivious shade of Ida's deep recesses

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PART IV

FAIRER than woman, blushing at the kiss
Of young keen Phoibos, whose lips' nectar is
More fresh than lilies, whose divine embrace
Flushes the creamy pallor of her face,
And, even in those depths of azure sea
Where her eyes dwell, bids them glint amorously,
While the intense hushed music of his breath
Sighs, till her longing grows divine as death—
So, fairer far, drew dawn on Ida's grove.
The young sun rose, whose burning lips of love
Kissed the green steeps, whose beamy locks of flame
Brushed o'er the dewy pastures, with acclaim
Of tuneful thrushes shrill with mountain song,
And noise of nightingales, and murmur long—
A sigh half-sad, as if remembering earth
And all the massy pillars of her girth;
Half-jubilant, as if foreseeing a world
Fresher with starlight and with waters pearled,

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Sunnier days and rivers calm and clear,
And music for four seasons of the year,
And pleasant peoples with glad throat and voice
Too wise to grieve, too happy to rejoice.
So came the dawn on Ida to disclose
Within her confines a delicious rose
Lying asleep, a-dreaming, white of brow,
Stainless and splendid. Yea, and fair enow
To tempt the lips of Death to kiss her eyes
And bid her waken in the sad surprise
Of seeing round her the iron gates of hell
In gloomy strength: so sweet, so terrible,
So fair, her image in the brook might make
A passionless old god his hunger slake
By plunging in the waters, though he knew
His drowning body drowned her image too.
Yet she seemed gentle. Never thorn assailed
The tender finger that would touch, nor failed
The strong desire of Zeus, who wisely went,
As was his wont, with amorous intent
Among those pastures, and fresh fragrant lawns,
And dewy wonder of new woods, where dawns
A new flower every day, a perfect flower,
Each queenlier than her sister, though the shower
Of early dew begemmed them all with stars,

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Diamond and pearl, between the pleasant bars
Of cool green trees that avenued the grove.
Zeus wandered through their bounds, and dreamt
of love.
Weary of women's old lascivious breed,
The large luxurious lips of Ganymede,
He, weary of tainted kiss and feverish lust,
Esteeming love a desert of dry dust
Because he found no freshness, no restraint,
No virgin bosom, lips without a taint
Of lewd imagining, yet passed not by
With scorn of curled lip and contempt of eye
The chaste abandon of the sleeping maid,
But looked upon her lips, checked course, and
stayed,
And noted all the virginal fresh air
Of Charicles, the maiden head half bare
To Phoibos' kiss, half veiled by dimpled arms
Within whose love it rested, all her charms
Half-shown, half-hidden, amorous but chaste.
And so, between the branches interlaced
And all the purple white-starred undergrowth,
Zeus crept beside the maiden, little loath
To waken her caresses, and let noon
Fade into midnight in the amorous swoon

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Of long delight, and so with gentle kiss
Touched the maid's cheek, and broke her dream
of bliss.
And she, more startled than the yearling fawn
As the rude sun breaks golden out of dawn,
One swift sharp beam of glory, leapt aside
And made as if to flee, but vainly plied
Her tender feet amid the tangled flowers.
For Zeus, enraptured, put forth all his powers,
And caught her panting, timid, tremulous.
And he with open lips voluptuous
Closed her sweet mouth with kisses, and so pressed
Her sobbing bosom with a manlier breast
That she was silent ; next, with sudden force,
Implacable, unshamed, without remorse,
Would urge his further suit, but so she strove
That even the power of Zeus, made weak for
love,
Found its last limit, and, releasing her,
Prayed for her grace, a raptured worshipper,
Where but a moment earlier had he striven
A sacrilegious robber. And all heaven
Seemed open to his eyes as she looked down
Into their love, half smiling, with a frown
Coquetting with her forehead. Then a change,

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Angry and wonderful, began to range
Over her cheeks ; she bitterly began :
" I will not yield to thee—a mortal man
Alone shall know my love. No God shall come
From his high place and far immortal home
To bend my will by force. Freeborn, I live
In freedom, and the love that maidens give
To men I give to one, but thou, most high,
(For woman's wits through your deceptions spy
And know ye for Olympians) shalt know
A maiden's heart no lover may win so.
Farewell, and find a fairer maid to love!
Farewell!" But he: "Through all the silent grove
I sought thee sighing—for thy love would I
Consent to be a man, consent to die,
Put off my godhead." " If thou sayest sooth,
And thy fair words bedew the flowers of truth
Nor wander in the mazy groves of lying,
I will be thine—speak not to me of dying
Or abdication, sith I deem so far
To tempt thee were unwise—we mortals are
Chary to ask too much—didst thou refuse
Either my honour or thy love to lose
Were a hard portion, for in sooth I love."
"Ah happy hour, sweet moment! Fairest grove

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Of all fair Ida, thou hast sealed my bliss!"
Then with one long intense unpitying kiss
Pressed on her bosom, he arose and swore
By heaven and earth and all the seas that roar
And stars that sing, by rivers and fresh flood,
By his own essence, by his body and blood,
To lay his godhead down, till night drew nigh,
To be a mortal till the vesper cry
Of dying breezes. So the morning past
And found them linked inexorably fast
Each in the other's arms. Their lips are wed
To drink the breezes from the fountain-head
Of lovers' breath. Now Zeus half rises up,
Sips once again from that moon-curvéd cup,
And, in his passion gazing on the flower,
Darker and riper for Love's perfect hour,
His clear voice through the silent atmosphere
Burst rich and musical upon her ear.

Song of Zeus

O rosy star
Within thy sky of ebony shot through
With hints of blue
More golden and more far

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Than earthly stars and flowers
That beam lasciviously through night's empurpled
hours!

O well of fire!
O fountain of delicious spurting flame
Grown sad with shame,
Whose imminent desire
Drinks in the dew of earth,
Gives its own limpid streams to quench man's
deathly dearth.

O gardened rose!
The fern-fronds gird thy fragrant beauty round.
Thy ways are bound
With petals that unclose
When the sun seeks his way
Through night and sleep and love to all the
dreams of day.

Love, sleep, and death!
The three that melt together, mingle so
Man may not know
The little change of breath
(Caught sigh that love desires,)
When love grows sleep, and sleep at last in death
expires.

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O lamp of love!
The hissing spray shall jet thee with desire
And foaming fire,
And fire from thee shall move
Her spirit to devour,
And fuse and mingle us in one transcendent hour.

Godhead is less
Than mortal love, the garland of the spheres,
Than those sweet tears
That yield no bitterness
To the luxurious cries
That love shrills out in death, that murmur when
love dies.

Love dies in vain.
For breezes hasten from the summer south
To touch his mouth
And bid him rise again,
Till, ere the dawn-star's breath,
Love kisses into sleep, Sleep swoons away to
Death.

So Zeus in her sweet arms slept daintily
Till the sun crept into the midmost sky,
And his own curse came back to sleep with him.

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Through the noon's haze the world was vast and
dim;
The streams and trees and air were shimmering
With summer heat and earth's cool vapouring,
When, round his limbs entwined, a fiery snake
Hissed in his frightened ear the call "Awake."
And Zeus arisen strives vainly to release
His valiant body from the coils, nor cease
His angry struggles in their cruel hold.
But all implacable, unyielding, cold,
Their sinuous pressure on his breast and thighs,
The white teeth sharp and ready otherwise
In one fierce snap to slay. There hissed "Be-
ware!
Fear Charicles avenging, and despair!"

And Zeus beheld the springe his foot was in,
And, once more wise, being out of love, would win
His freedom on good terms. His liberty
For Charicles' he bartered. Willingly
The boy accepts, yet in his eye remains
A tender woman-feeling, and his pains,
And even Archais' woes he did forget
In the sweet Lethe, that his lips had set
To their ripe brim, that he had drained. But now,

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Freedom regained, more manly grows the brow;
He is again the free, the bold, the lover!
Far o'er the green his new-starred eyes discover
A kirtle glancing in the breeze, a foot
That lightly dances, though the skies be mute
Of music. Forth she flies, the distant dove,
And calls the woodland birds to sing of love;
Forth leaps the stag and calls his mates; the stream
Flashes a silver sunbeam, a gold gleam
Of leaping laughter, that the fish may know
The goodly tidings; all the woodlands glow
With olive and pure silver and red gold,
And all sweet nature's marvels manifold
Combine together in the twilight dim
To harmonize in the thalamic hymn.

Hymn

O Lord our God!
O woodland king! O thou most dreadful God!
Who chasest thieves and smitest with thy rod,
That fearful rod, too sharp, too strong
For thy weak worshippers to bear!

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Hear thou their murmured song
Who cry for pardon ; pity, and prepare
For pain's delight thy votaries who kiss thy rod,
O high Lord God !

O Lord our God !
O garden tyrant ! O imperious god !
Who as a father smitest with thy rod
Thine erring children who aspire
In vain to the high mysteries
Of thy most secret fire.
Beat us and burn with nameless infamies !
We suffer, and are proud and glad, and kiss thy rod
O high Lord God.

O Lord our God !
O despot of the fields ! O silent god !
Who hidest visions underneath thy rod,
And hast all dreams and all desires and fears,
All secrets and all loves and joys
Of all the long vague years
For lightsome maidens and desire-pale boys
Within thy worship. We desire thy bitter rod,
O high Lord God !

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Thus that most reverend sound through all the
vale
Pealed in low cadences that rise and fail,
And all the augurs promise happy days,
And all the men for Archais have praise,
And all maids' eyes are fixed on Charicles.
Then, to the tune of musical slow seas,
The wind began to murmur on the mead,
And he, unconscious, drew his eager reed
From the loose tunic; now they seat themselves
On moss worn smooth by feet of many elves
Dancing at midnight through them, and their
voice
Bids all the woodland echoes to rejoice
Because the lovers are made one at last.
And Charicles began to play; they cast
Tunic and snood and sandal, and began
To foot a happy measure for a span,
While still Archais at his feet would sit,
Gaze in his eyes, by love and triumph lit,
And listen to the music. And the fire
Of his light reed so kindled her desire
That she with glad new confidence would quire
A new song exquisite, whose tender tune
Was nurtured at the bosom of the moon

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And kissed on either cheek by sun and rain.
She trembled and began. The troop was fain
To keep pure silence while her notes resound
Over the forest and the marshy ground.

ARCHAIS

Green and gold the meadows lie
In the sunset's eye.
Green and silver the woods glow
When the sun is low,
And the moon sails up like music on a sea of breathing snow.

Chain and curse are passed away;
Love proclaims the day.
Dawned his sunrise o'er the sea,
Changing olive waves to be
Founts of emerald and sapphire; he is risen, we are free.

Light and dark are wed together
Into golden weather;
Sun and moon have kissed, and built
Palaces star-gilt
Whence a crystal stream of joy, love's eternal wine, is spilt.

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CHARICLES

Join our chorus, tread the turf
To the beating of the surf.
Dance together, ere we part,
And Selene's dart
Give the signal for your slumber and the rapture of our heart.

Semi-Chorus of Men

Exalted with immeasurable gladness;
Bonds touched with tears and melted like the snow,
Wake the song loudly; loose the leash of madness,
Beat the loud drum, and bid the trumpet blow.

Semi-Chorus of Women

Let the lute thrill divinely low,
Let the harp strike a tender note of sadness;
Louder and louder, till the full song flow,
One earth-dissolving stream of utter gladness.

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CHORUS

Free! ye are Free! Delight, thou Moon, to hear us!
  Smile, Artemis, thy virgin leaves thy fold!
Star of the morning, fling thy blossom near us!
  Phoibos, re-kindle us with molten gold!
Starbeams and woven tresses of the ocean,
  Flowers of the rolling mountains and the lea,
    Trees, and innumerable flocks and herds,
    Wild cattle and bright birds,
  Tremble above the sea
With song more noble, the divinest potion
  Of poet's wonder and bard's melody!

ARCHAIS

Cold is the kiss of the stars to the sea,
  The kiss of the earth to the orient grey
  That heralds the day;
Warmer the kiss of a love that is free
  As the wind of the sea,
Quick and resurgent and splendid.

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CHARICLES

Night her bright bow-string has bended ;
  Fast flies her arrow unsparing
    Through the beech-leaves,
    Æther it cleaves
  Rapid and daring.
Ah! how it strikes as with silver! how the sun's
    laughter is ended!

ARCHAIS

How the moon's arms are extended!

Semi-chorus of Men

Rejoicing, inarticulate with pleasure,
  Joy streams a comet in the strong control
Of the sun's love; weave, weave the eager
    measure,
  Fill the sea's brim from pleasure's foaming
    bowl!

Semi-chorus of Women

Weave, weave the dance; the stars are not your
    goal.
  Freed slaves of Fortune, love's your only
    treasure.

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While the gold planets toward the sunlight roll,
Weave, weave the dance! Weave, weave the
eager measure!

CHARICLES

Of your revels I'll be king.

ARCHAIS

I the queen of your array.
Foot it nimbly in the ring,

CHARICLES

Strewn with violet and may.

ARCHAIS

Apple-blossom pile on high,
Till the bridal bed is duly
Panoplied with blooms that sigh.

CHARICLES

Not a flower of them shall die,
Every one shall blossom newly;
Stars shall lend them of their beauty,
Rain and sunshine know their duty.

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ARCHAIS

Not a flower of them shall die
That compose our canopy;
Beech and chestnut, poplar tall,
Birch and elm shall flourish all
Dewed with ever-living spring.
Song and dance shall close the day,

CHORUS

Close this happy, happy day.

CHARICLES

Of your revels I'll be king.

ARCHAIS

I the queen of your array.

Both

Foot it nimbly in the ring!

CHORUS

Stay, stars, and dance with us. Our songs compel
The very gods to tremble,
Banish the ill ghosts of hell,

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Make fiends their shape dissemble.
Freedom forbids their tyrannous reign here,
Flee to their prison must they, nor deceive;
Love has a lightning that shall strip them clear,
Truth through the curtain of the dark shall reave.
Ye love, O happy ones and chaste,
Ye love, and light indwells your eyes;
Truth is the girdle of your waist,
Ye play before the gates of pearl of Paradise.
Happy lovers, dwell together
In the isles of golden weather,
Free of tyranny and tether,
Roam the world, linked hand in hand,
Moonlight for your sleep, and breezes
Fresh from where the Ocean freezes,
And the cold Aurora stands
With new lilies in her hands.
Happy lovers, twilight falls,
Let us leave you for awhile,
Guarding all the golden walls
With the weapon of a smile.
Silver arrows from the maiden
With new labours laden

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Shall be shot at bold intruders who would violate your peace;
Lightning shall keep watch and warden through the sea-born isles of Greece.

Sleep! Sleep!
Sleep, ye happy lovers, sleep,
Soft and dreamless, sweet and deep,
Sleep! Sleep!

We will steal away
Till the break of day.

ARCHAIS

In the arms of love at last
Love is anchored fast,
Firm beyond the rage of Heaven, safe beyond the ocean blast.

CHARICLES

In the arms of love close prest,
And thy tender breast
Pillows now my happy head; softly breezes from the west

Both

Stir the ring-dove's nest.

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In the arms of love we lie;
Music from the sky
Tunes the hymeneal lyre that will echo till we
die.
God we feel is very nigh;
Soft, breeze, sigh
While we kiss at last to slumber,
And the varied number
Of the forest songsters cry:
This is immortality; this is happiness for aye.

Hush, the music swells apace,
Rolls its silver billows up
Through the void demesne of space
To the heavens' azure cup!
Hush, my love, and sleep shall sigh
This is immortality!

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EPILOGUE

IN HOLLOW STONES, SCAWFELL

BLIND the iron pinnacles edge the twilight ;
Blind and black the ghylls of the mountain clefted,
Crag and snow-clad slope in a distant vision
Rise as before me.

Here it seems my feet by a tiny torrent
Press the moss with a glad delight of being :
Here my eyes look up to the riven mountain
Split by the thunder.

Rent and rifted, shattered of wind and lightning,
Smitten, scarred, and stricken of sun and tempest,

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Seamed with wounds, like adamant, shod with iron,
Torn by the earthquake.

Still through all the stresses of doubtful weather
Hold the firm old pinnacles, sky-defying,
Still the icy feet of the wind relentless
Walk in their meadows.

Fields that flower not, blossom in no new spring-tide;
Fields where grass nor herb nor abounding darnel
Flourish; fields more barren, devoid, than ocean's
Pasture ungarnered.

Deserts, stone as arid as sand, savannahs
Black with wrecks, a wilderness evil, fruitless;
Still, to me, a land of the bluest heaven
Studded with silver.

Castles bleak and bare as the wrath of ocean,
Wasted wall and tower, as the blast had risen,
Taken keep and donjon, and hurled them earthward,
Rent and uprooted.

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Such rock-ruins people me tribes and nations,
Kings and queens and princes as pure as dawning,
Brave as day and true; and a happy people
Lulled into freedom;

Nations past the stormier times of tyrants,
Past the sudden spark of a great rebellion,
Past the iron gates that are thrust asunder
Not without bloodshed:

Past the rule of might and the rule of lying,
Free from gold's bad sceptre, and free to cherish
Joys of life diviner than war and passion—
Falsest of phantoms.

Only now true love, like a sun of molten
Glory, surging up from a sea of liquid
Silver, golden, exquisite, overflowing,
Soars into starland.

Only now the rivalry equal, eager,
Friendly, spurs the young to a mimic battle,
Spurs the old to honour, and fame, and fortune,
Ready to harvest.

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Sphere on sphere unite in the chant of wonder;
Star to star must add to the glowing chorus;
Sun and moon must mingle and speed the echo
Flaming through heaven.

Night and day divide, and the music strengthens,
Gathers roar of seas and the dirge of moorlands;
Tempest, thunder, birds, and the breeze of summer
Join to augment it.

So the sound-world, filled of the fire of all things,
Rolls majestic torrents of mighty music
Through the stars where dwell the avenging spirits
Bound in the whirlwind . . .

So the cliffs their Song . . . For the mist regathers,
Girds them bride-like, fit for the sun to kiss them;
Darkness falls like dewfall about the hillsides;
Night is upon me.

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Now to me remain in the doubtful twilight
Stretches bare of flower, but touched with whispers,
Grey with huddled rocks, and a space of woodland,
Pine-tree and poplar.

Now a stream to ford and a stile to clamber;
Last the inn, a book, and a quiet corner . . .
Fresh as Spring, there kisses me on the forehead
Sleep, like a sister.

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