

COLLECTED PLAYS AND POEMS



COLLECTED PLAYS
AND POEMS

BY
CALE YOUNG RICE



VOLUME ONE

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CALE YOUNG RICE

To
ALL THE WORLD'S POETS
FOR WHOM I HAVE FELT ADMIRATION
AND LOVE

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PREFACE

The present European war, with its heartbreak for humanity, should reveal the spirit of America, with its sources in the ideals of many nations, as no longer narrowly national, but definitely cosmopolitan. The opening of our doors to every civilization—and the consequent mingling of many racial classes—has made the serious absorption of much the outside world has to offer so easily possible, that even in our reading we have become strongly inclined to prefer the book from abroad to that written at home, though the latter is not infrequently of equal or superior quality.

Let this enlarged horizon once be realized by those who are confusedly looking for a point of view from which our writers may achieve an enduring literature that is distinctively “American,” and a new era will

begin. We shall no longer believe that to be authentically "national" we must continue to hash up the crude and inconsequential exaggerations characteristic of us in the minds of foreign readers; but by abandoning the impossible attempt to create supreme art out of social materials that are shifting and local, we shall see our way toward a national literature that shall embrace, perhaps for the first time in the history of the world, the universal hopes and impulses of humanity.

A confirmation of this belief lies in considerations of a more practical nature. The output of books in modern life is so great; translations from writers of large outlook are so many and admirable; and so marvellous are the communications by which the world's best books are brought to our hands, that only the blind can fail to see that lasting literary achievement must concern itself henceforward, as never before, with broadly human vision.

Yet this vision will not come, as a few of our more recent poets seem to fancy, from some imaginarily

new technique: for technique does not create vision, but is created by it. The true stylistic corollary of what has been affirmed above is merely, then, that all literary art of the future must adopt a more absolute economy of means: which signifies that the poet, naturally spendthrift of his imaginings, must forsake the flowery way of his fancies for a more complete concentration of energy on his vision.

To embody this vision without any loss of a feeling of inspired spontaneity, whose source seems infinite, will be his task. For only by possessing or suggesting some ineffable connection with the infinite will he be able to make a strict art economy seem divine.

A preface, whose purpose is to tune the reader's mind to what follows rather than set jangling in him a hundred diverse theories of criticism, should doubtless say no more. Let the rest, then, be silence.

CALE YOUNG RICE.

January, 1915.

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FAR QUESTS

FIRST PUBLISHED 1912

To
ANNE CRAWFORD FLEXNER
WHOSE UNFAILING APPRECIATION AND FRIENDSHIP
ARE HERE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGED

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THE MYSTIC

There is a quest that calls me,
In nights when I am lone,
The need to ride where the ways divide
The Known from the Unknown.
I mount what thought is near me
And soon I reach the place,
The tenuous rim where the Seen grown dim
And the Sightless hides its face.

*I have ridden the wind,
I have ridden the sea,
I have ridden the moon and stars.
I have set my feet in the stirrup seat
Of a comet coursing Mars.*

*And everywhere
Thro the earth and air
My thought speeds, lightning-shod,
It comes to a place where checking pace
It cries, "Beyond lies God!"*

It calls me out of the darkness,
It calls me out of sleep,
"Ride! ride! for you must, to the end of Dust!"
It bids — and on I sweep
To the wide outposts of Being,
Where there is Gulf alone —
And thro a Vast that was never passed
I listen for Life's tone.

*I have ridden the wind,
I have ridden the night,
I have ridden the ghosts that flee
From the vaults of death like a chilling breath
Over eternity.*

*And everywhere
Is the world laid bare —
Ether and star and clod —
Until I wind to its brink and find
But the cry, "Beyond lies God!"*

It calls me and ever calls me!
And vainly I reply,
"Fools only ride where the ways divide
What Is from the Whence and Why!"
I'm lifted into the saddle
Of thoughts too strong to tame,
And down the deeps and over the steeps
I find . . . ever the Same.

*I have ridden the wind,
I have ridden the stars,
I have ridden the force that flies
With far intent thro the firmament
And each to each allies.*

*And everywhere
That a thought may dare
To gallop, mine has trod —
Only to stand at last on the strand
Where just beyond lies God.*

THE WIFE OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

The wife of Judas Iscariot
Went out into the night,
She thought she heard a voice crying:
Was it to left or right?

She went forth to the Joppa Gate,
Three crosses hung on high,
The one was a thief's, the other a thief's,
The third she went not nigh.

For still she heard the voice crying:
Was it to right or left?
Or was it but a wind of fear
That blew her on bereft?

She went down from the Joppa Gate
 Into the black ravine.
She climbed up by the rocky path
 To where a tree was seen.

And "What, sooth, do I follow here?
 Is it my own mad mind?
Judas! Judas Iscariot!"
 She called upon the wind.

"Judas! Judas Iscariot!"
 She crept beneath the tree.
What thing was it that swung there,
 Hung so dolorously?

"Judas! Judas Iscariot!"
 She touched it with her hand.
The leaves shivered above her head,
 To make her understand.

“Judas! Judas! my love! my lord!”

Her hands went o'er it fast,
From foot to thigh, from thigh to throat,
And stopped — there — at last.

“Judas! Judas! what has He done,
The Christ you followed so!”

More than the silver left on him
Made answer to her woe.

“Judas! Judas! what has He done!

O has it come to this!
The Kingdom promised has but proved
For you a soul-abyss!

“Was He the Christ and let it be?” . . .

She cut him from the limb,
And held him in her arms there
And wept over him,

“None in the world shall ever know
Your doubts of Him but I!
‘Traitor! traitor! and only traitor!’
Will ever be their cry!

“None in the world shall ever know —
But I who am your wife!”
She flung the silver from his purse:
It made a bitter strife.

It rattled on the ringing rocks
And fell to the ravine.
“Was He the Christ and let it be?”
She moaned, still, between.

She held him in her arms there,
And kissed his lips aright,
The lips of Judas Iscariot,
Who hanged himself that night.

STAR OF ACHIEVEMENT

I

Star of Achievement!

Star that arose when man first rose on the earth
And felt within him the Upward Urge of Being;
Star of the ultimate heaven, that of the soul;
Wondrous is thy ascension,
Wondrous thy lifting up of him, thy chosen —
Of man, above all creatures!

II

The earth was green when he came,
The earth with its myriad-teeming mountains and
valleys,
The earth with its veiling shading clouds and breezes,

The earth that brought to birth all seas and continents.

The elder slime had conceived, preparing his way.
Its womb impregnate with the command of the
Infinite

Strove to give birth to a form
In whose high-spacious spirit thou shouldst appear.
But the travails of it were vain.

For not in its wingéd thing, or its saurian,
Or leviathan lashing the sea,
Or mastodom shaking the land,
Not, not in these, O Star, thy light awoke —
But mystically in man!

III

And dim, dim was thy beam, primevally!
By it man hoped no more at first than to seize
And hold a rude cave in the forest,
To shape with a stone a stone for his protection,

To clothe him with a wild skin and watch with
wonder

The magic of river and tree and melting mist,
Of springing storms that died in dens of thunder.
Dim was thy beam, a will-o'-the-wisp that flitted
On dreams and vague desires.

Yet in his need he sought to see thee clearer.
Savage he was, but, in the sky of his soul,
Wast thou, a whisperer of aspirations,
From age to age leading him,
With a little gain upward:
From the cave to the hut, his first home upon
earth,
From enmity with all beasts to toil with some.

Savage he was, yet in his vast soul-dark
He was not all forsaken,
Not left alone in the wilderness of Nature
With naught of hope to lead his look above it,
With naught to bid him master it.

For Star, O Star, he ever found thy light
In all, as in the hard flint imprisoned fire.
And as time sped —
Unmeasured but by thee, O Shiner on him,
But by thy inspiration to his soul,
Thy seeds of light quickened in him to knowledge,
And knowledge grew to dream and dream to power.
Speech did he learn from thy bright whisperings,
And with it moulded winds
And the rhythm of wild waters into Song,
That grew too precious to trust utterly
To lips that perished,
So thou, O Star, put in his hand the stylus,
And lo, ravisht, he wrote!

IV

But death was ever with him!
O . . . ! death! . . .
A little while he counted suns and moons,
A little while he slipped amid the seasons,

A little while he gazed upon thy glow —
And then was gone!

Whither, O Star?

Thy answer was, *Into the invisible,*
Into the land of spirits.

And not since thy first beam, O Soul-uplifter,
Had any fallen on him like to this,
For from it was born worship, from it the gods.
In the Unseen they rose,
In the place where flesh is not, nor dust that
dieth,

But only the powers that make all things to be.

Yea, yea, the gods were born!

And temples towering, O Star, and cities,
Wherein, reigning above all war and waste,
All famine, ill and sin and pestilence,
They ever seemed to bid him
To fix his eyes upon thee,
To sail the centuries by thee —

Forgetful oft and breaking oft upon shoals,
On granite laws and tyrannies,
On many a reef of folly,
On many a seeming harbour set with ruin —
But making many a haven safe at last!

v

Yea, as the nations know!
The nations who send up their praise to thee,
Hymning a hundred chartings he has made!
India cries, "To Meditation's Port,
O Star, he came by thee and found the Infinite."
And Egypt older yet upon the seas,
"I launched him first on the known tide of time."
Greece chants, "I gave him beauty for the world!"
And the Christ-land, "To Beauty I brought Love!"
While Rome whose voyage led from Port to Port
Gathered all praise of thee,
And echoed it from Albion to the Elbe,
And southward by Hispania to the Straits,

Thro which at length it leapt the loth Atlantic,
The Vast, the Unsailed,
Like luring music,
Before the bows of mightiest mariners,
And lo, lo, the rounded earth was one!

VI

And men, O fair Effulgence,
Men too were one!
Bound consciously at last by the deep rays,
By thy divine deep rays of brotherhood!
For with hands locked around their little planet —
Which they had learned was not alone God's care —
Locked fast by fear and awe,
Or by the gentler bonds of hope and pity,
They saw, thro thy revealings,
That earth fares in an infinitesimal round
Mid infinite sun-spaces,
And that upon their littleness and briefness
And universal fate hangs fraternity.

So close they throng together, closer, O Star,
With every shedding of thy radiance
Thro new soul-firmaments of vaster range.
For tho they are finite sparks
For ever and ever blown, toward infinite Dark,
By the breath of Life —
And lonely save for hope of a Rekindling,
Or for each other's light along the way,
They trust in thee, O Star, Star of Achievement,
Trust thy ascension,
Shining sure ascension,
Thro nebulous realms that seem unknowable —
Toward constellated Love and Truth and Freedom!
Toward zenithed Joy!
Toward life's Intent, in the central heaven of all!

CLOISTER LAYS

I

BROTHER GIAN

(Of the Benedictines at Monte Cassino)

Circa 1080

Dear Jesus Christ, I'm Brother Gian.
Within my cell I sit and scratch
From pagan parchments words writ on
Such vellum as not kings can match.
Words, Greek and Latin — all profane.
Three Homers I have quite erased
And look to see their lies replaced
By lives of Saints without a stain.

This Virgil now: I'll do it next.

 Last night it tempted me to peep
A moment at its wicked text,
 Telling of nymphs . . . I could not sleep.
Dear Jesus Christ, I dreamt I was
 A faun within a Bacchic rout,
 And one white creature chose me out:
I broke with kisses all Thy laws.

Here is the place . . . I danced as wild
 As any bacchant of them all,
With ivy-woven tresses whiled
 Mad hours that maddened at her call.
She led me far into the wood
 Where not a Pan or Satyr leapt.
 Dear Jesus Christ, 'twas Satan swept
Me on — I scarcely understood.

Here is the place. . . . For in my dream
 Each letter trembled and became

A nymph: the parchment was a stream
Of shapes that glimmered without shame.
I danced and followed where she fled
With lips wine-glad bent back to shout.
Dear Jesus Christ, beyond a doubt
She rose where "Venus" here I read.

So first of all I raze its shame!
And pray that in its place may stand
Some letter of the Virgin's name
Writ by a pure and holy hand,
And set about with red and gold
And lilies — where my eyes still see
But glimmering limbs that tempt and flee,
But shimmering arms that would enfold.

Dear Jesus Christ, this I confess,
And fasting will I toil until
The vellum, white as holiness,
Shall be fit for an angel's quill!

An angel like the nymph with eyes
And body that . . . Dear Jesus Christ,
To woman was man sacrificed!
From Eve his sins forever rise!

II

SISTER PAULA

(Of the Benedictine Nuns)

I will not shun to touch the poor,
Tho loathsome be their bruises,
Nor fail to toil, O Virgin Pure,
On garments for their uses.
The sacramental bell I'll tend
Unceasing, soon or late,
But O, upon thy image there,
That clasps the Babe unto it, fair,
I pray, bid me not wait!

The holy water I will fetch
From Rome, afaint and fasting;

On the cold chapel-stones I'll stretch
 Long nights without repasting.
Sackcloth I'll bind about my waist,
 Nor ever will I rest,
But, Virgin Mother, let it be
That I need not look up and see
 The child there on thy breast!

For seeing it I can but sin,
 I, ne'er to be a mother,
And think of love that might have been,
 And of one, now Christ's brother,
Who tosses in his convent cell
 On billows of desire,
While toiling hours strike on his dreams
Stern blows of penitence that seems
 To shatter them with fire!

I can but sin — and cast away
 All love that is not human,

That has not mystic joy to sway
 True-mated man and woman!
That does not spring and fill the world
 With children and with song;
With passion, in the summer night,
Upon young lips bliss hallows quite,
 Heart-bliss that is so strong!

I can but sin — the while this veil
 I wear seems but to strangle;
The while all vows I follow fail,
 Vows made but to entangle!
The while laud, vesper and compline
 Sound to my childlessness
Like chants the hapless heathen pour
On altars of false gods — no more!
 Such is my wickedness!

Therefore, O Virgin, set my hands
 To tasks however lowly,

To penance only cloister-bands
Of Magdalens pay slowly!
Let me be less within thy sight
Than Heaven's lowest heir,
But place me not where I must brood
On the lost bliss of motherhood —
Before thy image there!

LIMITATIONS

(Art and the Man)

I am savage for life and the lusts
Of beckoning quests I have banished,
I am gluttoned with Beauty's face
And the brush that I paint her with,
I am sick of the dreams and dusts
Of the soul of me — of the vanished
Lone years that I spent in chase
Of the luring lips of Myth.

I was suckled for more than to fling
The blood of my heart on a palette.
I was given the eye of a god
For more than a picture's worth.

I have felt the ineffable sting
Of Life — tho I be Art's valet.
I have painted the cloud — or the clod,
Who should have possessed the earth.

The Cæsar in me, and the Christ
Cry out to be given power.
The Antony in my veins
Would waste a world's throne for his queen.
And what to Ulysses sufficed —
The infinite far foam-flower! —
That only would quench the quest
Of my soul for worlds unseen.

The law of it, God, do I hate,
That a man with the might of many
Must hold to the task of one —
In the groove of an ancient awe;
Or find, if his will, o'er great,
Denies to be bound by any,
The body of him shall break, undone,
And Fate appear in the flaw.

HIGHLAND JOY

(Wales)

The blue-bells ring in the bracken,
The heather bells on the hill,
The gorse is yellow
The sunlight mellow
With music of wind and rill!

Afar the mountains are rising
High Snowdon and all his knights,
For some fair tourney
With clouds that journey
Up from the sea's blue bights!

O winds, O waters, O mountains,
O earth with your singing sod,
I'm glad of the weather
That brings together
My heart and the heart of God!

TO THE SPIRIT OF NATURE

A myriad years you have led us
In adoration on
To worship of wind and water,
Wood, star and wingèd dawn.
A myriad years you have held us
In an ecstasy of trust,
But never a thing have told us
Of the meaning of life's lust.

Your suns and your moons and seasons
We have hallowed with our praise,
With a passion like a lover's
We have clasped your nights and days.
In solitudes we have trysted
And in silence, yearning long,
And singing, in sooth, it taught us,
But not the meaning of song.

Your flowers we know and name them
 With breaths of beauty o'er,
Your leaves and their million lispings
 We have treasured more and more.
Your clouds we have followed farther
 Than fancy follows thought,
And many a gleam have gathered,
 But not the gleam we sought.

The sea and its soul of power
 Has had of our hearts full awe
And love; tho we know what tribute
 Has fed its mystic maw.
Brave litanies we have lipped it,
 Brave prayers have we paid,
But infinite is its answer —
 And of that we are afraid!

And yet with joy for the jungle,
 With wonder for the wild,
Your lure and delight have led us
 As the rainbow leads the child.

Your deserts burning and dewless
Have given our spirits drink,
But whence it has come we know not,
From what Elysian brink.

Nor why, on heights of the mountain,
In chasms of earth's crust,
We feel forever the Presence
That is not framed of dust;
That is not born of the atoms,
Nor by the ether bound;
That seeks forever to find us,
Yet never can be found.

So come but a little nearer —
Or farther breathe away.
Be more to us than a Presence
That says nor yea nor nay.
Between the seen and the shadowed
Stand not so strangely dumb,
Yet if you must, still let us trust
The Word at last shall come.

THE PILGRIMS OF THIBET

Down the road to Llasa,
Himàlayan and strange,
I thought I saw them winding
From range to lower range,
The seekers after Buddha,
Across the ice and cold,
And from their lips the mystic phrase
Of merit ever tolled:

‘Om mane padme, hum!’
Life is but a way of lust.
Turn the wheel and beat the drum,
Till we to Nirvana come.

Clothed in rags and turquoise
And necklaces of skulls,
And shoes of yak worn furless,
And fleece the shepherd culls,

With faces like to parchments

Whereon alone was writ

The repetition of those words

Of wonder infinite:

‘Om mane padme, hum!’

Life is but a robe of lust.

Turn the wheel and beat the drum

Till we to Nirvana come.

Down the road ascetic

And desert, bleak and drear,

I thought I saw them winding

To Llasa walls more near;

Strong man and maid and mother,

Shorn youth and sexless age,

That ever to the wind intoned

Their one acquitting page:

‘Om mane padme, hum!’

Grief is but the goal of lust.

Turn the wheel and beat the drum,

Till we to Nirvana come.

Past the hermit's cavern —

Where he alone drew breath! —

Past nunneries where silence

Waits, acolyte of death;

Past shrines of lesser power,

Where smiling idols wear

The bliss upon their gilded lips

Of the all-granting prayer.

‘Om mane padme, hum!’

Leave the life of flesh and lust.

Turn the wheel and beat the drum,

Till we to Nirvana come.

Down the road — and down it,

I saw them, lama-led,

Mid holy lakes and mountains,

And monasteries fed

With endless alms — and measured

By slow prostrations round,

And by the chanted syllables

That sprung as from the ground.

'Om mane padme, hum!'
Life is but the lair of lust.
Turn the wheel and beat the drum,
Till we to Nirvana come.

Then at last to Llasa

They reach — I see them yet! —
And touch the gods on altars
Above all others set.

Monk, man and maid and mother,
Upon the Wheel of Things,
From which escape shall come alone
To him who ceaseless sings:

'Om mane padme, hum!'
End the life of greed and lust.
Turn the wheel and beat the drum,
Till we to Nirvana come.

HIERANTIS

(The First to see the One God)

B. C.—

I went out and lay down on the earth.

Dawn was not, but the sea and the sky

Held an auspice, as dimly my soul

Held a vision I strained to descry.

Held a vision, that hung below birth

In my brain, as the sun in his stole

Of imagined and infinite light

Was yet hung in the deeps of the night.

I went out and lay down on the breast

Of the mountain; I clasped it and cried,

“Let me see what is from me withheld!

For the gods I am fain to deride!

All the temples and groves that are drest
 In the dream of the Spring have enspelled
Me to reverence, but to no trust:
Is all lifting of prayers but a lust?"

For I knew that men worshipped the sun
 And the moon and the might of the stars;
That on earth were peoples who made
 Of all things, quick or dead, avatars;
Of the tree, of the rivers that run
 From a source beyond sight; seeking aid
Of the wind, or beseeching the seas
That no sacrifice e'er can appease.

O I knew, and was so at despair
 Of all altars, all incense and praise!
"There is fortune," I said, "there is fate,
 But they fall in a myriad ways.
To no god of one way will I bare
 And abase me — his rending await:

Little gods are no gods; give me one
In whose hands are all things that are done!"

Then I saw! on the soul of me burst
Light unbreathable, for I beheld
How a thought, that to man was before
Never sent, could all Mystery weld!
"There is One, there is One God! the First
And the Last," did I triumph, "No more!
And his throne is the Atom, the Star,
Is all things that have been and that are!

"He is god of the East and the West,
He is God of the Night and the Known,
He is Sun, he is Storm, he is Shade,
He is Strife, he is Dust that is strewn!
He is Star, he is Foam on the Crest
Of the Wave, he is Wind that is stayed;
He is what shall live Ever, or Die,
He is Pity and Hope — he is I!"

Like delirium thro me it ran,
Like divinity, for in a flash
Was the universe mine, I had torn
The last veil — O immortally rash!
It was mine! all the vast Caravan
Of its Being from bourne unto bourne:
For the vision that swept me, a clod,
Was His vision, was He — the One God!

I arose: the sun stood like a priest
In ineffable gladness of gold
To embrace me, a proselyte, who
Had heard all that to heart can be told.
I outreached him my arms, I the least
Yet the greatest that dawn ever knew,
Then went down, with what rapturous ken,
To tell all to the children of men.

LA MORGUE LITTERAIRE

A house for all dead books
Beside Oblivion's River
I saw the lone ghosts build
With hands Plutonian.
Its walls were wan and chilled,
And only Time's faint shiver
Ran thro it, not the blessed breath of Pan.

They built it at the foot
Of hoary Charon's ferry.
Its gate upon the tide
Stood like a mouth of fate.
And often to its side,
Mid souls death could not bury,
He brought within his boat the futile freight.

Yea, all the futile freight —
Of Song that had no pinions,
Of Histories by earth
Long treasured — fell to him.
And tales no Muse gave birth
Within her fair dominions
He wafted o'er and ranged within it dim.

And soon unto its gate
From out the fines Lethean
Came many a phantom form
On foot that hung with dread —
Came lips that once were warm
And eyes despair made peon
When they beheld amid dead tomes their dead.

And some their hands would wring —
A usage of old sorrow
They had forgotten long
In that Tartarean vale.

And some amid the throng
In vain would strive to borrow
From memory a might to voice their wail.

But many merely gazed
And went away forgetting
To watch with listless tread
Old Charon flit and fare.
For these found not their dead
And knew that life was letting
Them still a little bide — but did not care.

A house for all dead books
Beside Oblivion's River,
Built by the barren shades:
Alas who shall not find,
Brought to him by the raids
Of Time, all breath's outliver,
What he had held immortal for men's mind.

PHILOSOPHIES

Dead old Earth, still wrapt in russet,
Not a sprig of Spring?
Not a bird yet to discuss it,
From the South a-wing?
What if buds should never burgeon
On your breast again?
Would it mean God, like a surgeon,
Cuts you from his ken?

Cuts you from his cosmic Being,
Sets you free of life?
Free of His deep overseeing,
Of His upward strife?
Are there in the great space yonder
Millions so set free?
Dead worlds that o'er dead ways wander,
With no destiny?

Fie on fancies so unfruitful!

Hear that robin fling

Laughter at me with his fluteful

Messages of Spring.

Laughter which is Earth's and Heaven's

Best philosophy!

Which, divinely ever, leavens

Life with sanity!

LOVE BY TRAETH-Y-DARAN

(Wales)

At Traeth-y-daran the laver-weed grows,
So take thy creel, O Madlen mine,
We'll gather it full ere the moon's a-shine
And bear it home from the dripping brine.

At Traeth-y-daran the laver-weed grows:
We'll cook it over the red culm-fire.
And I will tell thee my heart's desire,
And thou shalt tell me thine.

At Traeth-y-daran the laver-weed grows.
Thy creel, my lass! to the cliff we'll hie
And seek in the clefts where the gulls go by
Like dreams of love in a blue, blue eye.

At Traeth-y-daran the laver-weed grows —
And there each wind that above it wings
Shall waft unto us sweet murmurings
Of love, that can not die.

A LYDIAN BACCHANAL

The stag was gone
And the hounds that follow;
The glade was still,
Not a stir around.
Not a doe or fawn
That had failed to follow,
With keenest fear
Could have sensed a sound.
And yet on the hill
There was something hid;
In the coppice near
Was a presence felt,
Of eyes and feet

That were full of thrill,
Of limbs a-quiver
To leap and bound.

Then sudden the leaves
Of a laurel stirred,
The branches parted
And eyes peered out,
With bacchic stealth
Of glance that started,
Then vanisht as if
Pan-hoofs were heard.
But not a hoof
From the bushes broke;
Not a wild-hearted
Pipe poured health
And happy lust
Thro the deep vine-woof,
Hung from the trees
By the dryad folk.

None: till, again,
The eyes! between
Leafy fillets
Of parted green.
And then, with lips
Of fear unpursed,
Out with a cry
The bacchantè burst!
Out with a cry
To the hills about:
Out with a cry
To the bacchant hid!
Out with her cry
For the reel and rout —
The amorous pipe
And the thyrsus-thrid!

And swiftly he came,
On foot as light
As ever the vine-god
Wove in dance!

Swiftly he came
With eyes as bright
As ever the wine-god
Taught to glance!
Swiftly he came
With fawn-skin tossed
Over his shoulder,
Ivy-crowned!
Myrtle and thyme
And reed he crossed,
Seized her and whirled her
Glorying round!

O the dance!
Thro the heart of Spring!
Bacchus! Bacchus!
God of the grape! —
The reeling trance
And the rapture-fling
Of naked limbs —
The ravishing!

O the dance!
In the deeps of May!
Bacchus, behold
What here is loosed!
What mystery,
What passion-sway,
What deity
By thee induced!

But hist! the call
Of their comrade-band!
They pause, panting,
And parted listen.
The flame of love
In their hearts is fanned
To mad desire,
Their eyes glisten.
They whisper a tryst
In the deeper wood
At night — night —
When the stars cover!

For what is good —
What is divine —
But the clasp of lover
Unto lover!

A tryst: then lo,
Lo, they have kissed.
Then she is gone,
And he. fleetly.
Behind is left
In the limpid glade
A stir of bliss
That has been completely.
The silence sings
Of the dance but hushed;
The trodden thyme
And the crocus, bleeding,
Seem not to care,
But, torn and crushed,
Remember only
The wild pipe's pleading!

Bacchus! Bacchus!
This was your way!
Close to the seasons,
Close to the sod!
Close to the welling
Of all reasons
For our delight, O god!

AESCHYLUS

Ha! and did you, people of Greece,
Praise the warrior, not the poet?
“Bravely at Marathon he fought”—
That alone on his tomb ye wrought?
Courage? why it is common stuff,
Fire of the flesh — a million know it!
And did he
With the eye to see
Prometheus mastering destiny —
Did *he* count it enough?

Raze the tablet and write again,
You by the Styx, who one time heard
Orestes rave with immortal word,
And Ædipus rock your hearts with pain.

Write: The fire of his flesh burnt true,
But out of Olympian skies he drew
A flame to kindle
The mighty fame
Of Greece wherever a tongue shall name
High Tragedy — that first he came
Immortally to woo!

COSMISM

The sea asleep like a dreamer sighs;
 The salt rock-pools lie still in the sun,
Except for the sidling crab that creeps
 Thro the moveless mosses green and dun.
The small gray snail clings everywhere,
 For the tide is out; and the sea-weed dries
Its tangled tresses in the warm air,
 That seems to ooze from the far blue skies,
Where not a white gull on white wing flies.

The mollusc gleams like a gem amid
 The scurf and the clustered green sea-grapes,
Whose trellis is but the rock's bare side,
 Whose husbandman but the tide that drapes.

The little sandpiper tilts and picks
His food, on the wet sea-marges hid,
Till sudden a wave comes in and flicks
Him off, then flashes away to bid
Another frighten him — as it did.

O sweet is the world of living things,
And sweet are the mingled sea and shore!
It seems as if I never again
Shall find life ill — as oft before.
As if my days should come as the clouds
Come yonder — and vanish without wings;
As if all sorrow that ever shrouds
My soul and darkly about it clings
Had lost forever its ravenings.

As if I knew with a deeper sense
That good alone is ultimate;
That never an evil wrought of God
Or man came truly out of hate.

That Better springs from the heart of Worse,
As calm from the heaving elements;
That all things born to the Universe
May suffer and perish utterly hence,
But never refute its Innocence.

THE EXCOMMUNICANT

(In the time of Pope Sixtus V)

Praise be, praise be, to printers all!
Old Sixtus on his throne
Would damn my soul to Hell with a Bull —
And now he has damned his own!

“I’ll have the Vulgate set,” said he,
“In type beyond reproof;
Without a wicked error — made
Tho it be by the Devil’s hoof!

“It shall surpass in dot and jot
All ink has ever etched,
For every holy sheet of it
Shall ’fore my eye be fetched.

“And, in a preface black and clear,
I’ll excommunicate
All who shall dare to change the text
But a tittle, by God’s hate!”

So straight he put his toads to it,
His Gregory, Pius, Paul,
And not with a pint of Asti let
Them wet their wits withal!

Each new white sheet he conned himself
With care “infallible,”
Then bound them up — to find them foul
With errors, frowsy full!

And all the world of heretics
Is tittering now — from Thun
To Tiber, from the Thames to where
The Turk swears by Haroun!

“Papal Infallibility has damned
The Pope himself,” they gloat,
“For he must paste the errors o’er
And be his own scapegoat!”

Old Sixtus Fifth, who from his throne
Would damn my soul to Hell,
Shall lick the Devil’s presses there
And print blasphemies well!

ANDRE REVINE

“So let it be,”
You say, and cease,
And sit there with seraphic mien,
Knowing the rage
You rouse in me
Is fraught with fate, André Rêvine!

Yet as the gulf
Between us grows,
Perfection lives upon your lips,
While mine are flames
That burn and tear
The ties that wedded us to strips.

And, did we part,
The world would say,
“We know which of the twain was true
To tortured Love.”
The world would say,
André Rêvine, that it was you.

For am I not
Unhappy born,
A magnet to all floating fates?
And is it not
Unhappiness
The world ever suspects and hates?

And are not you
A thing so bright
That shadow cannot o'er you fall?
A thing so glad
That guilt, if flung,
Would but upon me fix its pall?

You answer not,
André Révine,
But all-enduring sit and sigh.
And yet I see
That triumph springs
In you at my defeated cry.

“So let it be,”
Then say I too;
But this I hold the better part:
To let flame break
From anguished lips,
Than kindle it in any heart!

THE CRY OF THE DISILLUSIONED

Come back to our hearts, fairies, fairies,
Wild little folk
Of youth and delight!
For time that has driven you from us carries
After you ever
Our aching sight.
Come back and dance in the Place of our Dreams,
Empty it lies of your glimmering feet;
Come back, for Hope at its portal tarries,
Tuning her harp to their beat.
Come back and tell us immortally
The way of the wind
And the way of waters,
The way of the gull on the shining sea,
And of the sky's cloud-daughters.

Come back and toil shall again be sweet —
And faith shall follow,
The fairer, after!
O toss to heaven enchantedly
Your song and your singing laughter.
Come back, O come, and the years shall flow
Again — and quicken our hearts to see
Beauty and love, as once, a-glow
Under Spring's witchery!

THE DESERTER OF NIRVANA

I went into Pagoda-land,
Far far it is away,
And built me a low hut along the shore.
The opiate sea came up the sand
And murmured at my door
And a wind-bell tinkled on my shrine all day.

Between three palms I built the hut,
Three bent above the shrine:
Gautama in it sat imparting all.
I drank the milk of the cocoanut
The wonted wind let fall,
And watched the lotos-moon bloom o'er the brine.

And there I lived, and looked to die —
And there to live again,
And write upon a palm-leaf all day long
The sutras that should teach me why
Desire of life is wrong
Within a world born of Illusion's pain.

Aye there I lived, and looked to die —
And there to live again,
Beside the sea, the shrine, the bending palms —
That never cease in me to sigh,
Now, of eternal calms
That I forsook and nevermore shall gain.

WHAT MORE, O SEA

What more, O sea, what more from your mad lips
Of mystic and immitigable ioam,
That hiss and writhe the hungrier, tho brave ships
Last night were swallowed in eternal gloam?
What more now would you, Atheist, whom the wind
Wakens to wild anathemas that rise
To the universal temple of the skies
And in the very ears of God are dinned?

Have you a blasphemy more bitter still,
A curse to hurl yet o'er infinity,
A scorn of men who frame with feeble will
A phantom which they name Divinity?
And with it would you shake apart the stars
That light His presence with encircling flame?

O sea, would you wash out His very Name
From space's sempiternal calendars?

Enough! your surging infidelity

And stormy mockery reach but as high
As do the thoughts of men who strain to see
Into time's unimaginable Why.

Earth's but a cockle bearing *you* across

A Wider Sea, which is God or is not.

Know then, your little lips can ne'er allot
Disproof of Him, if needs must come that loss.

ORIENTAL MEMORIES

I

RAIN IN İSÈ

(Japan)

The rain is falling upon the fields
Of green-tipt rice that grows in İsè.
Under the thatch in a cloak of straw
The clouded peasant sits.
The sea is hidden by mist, that yields
And parts and closes again, in fleecy
Saddening silence, like a dream
That over sorrow flits.

The rain is falling upon the fields
Of flooded rice: the rain is falling.

Crossing the dimness like a wraith
A lonely 'rickshaw creeps.
The rain is falling and strangely wields
A power to hush the sea that's calling —
Hush the sea and the peasant's heart,
Till sorrowless he sleeps.

II

A CHINESE CITY

(At Night)

Thro the great wall, and down into the street,
Where light and darkness narrowly contend,
And teeming yellow faces start or blend
In opiate strangeness, sinister or sweet.

A joss-house suddenly, and incense vain
Against the stench of the strong god of dirt,
Whose priest is pestilence that waits inert
Till for a million victims death is fain.

III

A BURMESE IDOL

The Shwe Dagon, with all its shrines
Of twilight-saddened gold and glass.
Among the thousand idols one
I gaze upon but cannot pass.

It sits within a dark retreat —
Sits stony white, with painted brows
And eyes and smiling lips and hands
Laid as Nirvana's law allows.

And faded flowers by it lie,
Between the flickering candle-flames,
That, like to moving lips without,
Seem murmuring Siddhartha's names.

I gaze and lo a hemisphere
Of space and thought slips from me, till . . .
The book I dream o'er falls; I wake —
The West within and round me still.

IV

IN CEYLON

Tall palms against the tropic sky,
The Indian Ocean's karma-beat;
A far faint ship that passes by,
And Time sick-hearted with the heat.

V

NORTH INDIA

An arid waste, rent by the creak
Of wells that toiling oxen drain.
Where not the gods themselves can wreak
More poverty or draw more pain.

Where cities to the jackal wide,
And cities Caste is ruling still,
Seem equally by Fate allied
To Superstition's sterile will.

VI

THE KHAM SIN, AT CAIRO

A tawny terror in the light
That beats against each minaret.
Sands that entombed Osiris fight
With Allah, and shall vanquish yet.

The Sphinx awaits it; and the wind,
Born of the desert, sends a cry
Across her lips, lest she rescind
Her smile — that says all gods shall die.

VII

THE JORDAN — AND JERICHO

A muddy Serpent sliding thro the sand
To the Dead Sea its hole;
A Dirt-heap where the German's scholar-hand
Sifts from the past some dole.

A heat-sere hospice set between them, bare
But for a garden-side,
Where God still walks, upon the scented air,
At eventide.

SNOWDONIAN HILLS

O wild hills of Wales,
Hills of whirling rain,
Hills of flying mist and haunted moor,
You tell your tales
Of Arthur and his train
To every rivered coombe your crags immure.

Grey Merlin moods
And meanings o'er you sweep,
Enchantments of your spirit sad or glad.
And far-famed feuds,
A thousand years asleep,
Wake in the wind that moans about you mad.

In cloud-swept mail
Old Snowdon, who's your king,
The lightning, his Excalibur, whirls white.
And that great grail,
The sun, a mystic thing,
Breaks sudden forth — to vanish into night.

From Caerleon's shrine
To Mona in the sea,
From the Great Orme to Milford of renown,
You lift your line:
No other hills there be
To win from you in Britain's list the crown.

But more, oh, more
Than old Romance you tell,
Than Druid legend hushed in Knighthood's lay.
Your wild vales pour
From Nature's deeper well
The poetry to heal all hearts that pray.

Yea, health-born joy

 You give to all that come,

 And chivalry for this — to charge the host
Of ills that cloy

And bodings that benumb

 The soul of man, earth cherishes the most!

TO SHELLEY

(In Italy)

I

Shelley, the winds of your song are blowing
Over the fields of my heart to-day,
Where the wild flowers of Grief are growing
Up from the deep World-Soul astray;
The winds you gathered from earth to Uranus,
From atom to far Arcturus' light,
From visible vastitudes that pain us,
And vasts invisible to sight.

II

The winds that ever, with incantation,
Evoke you verily for my eyes,

Your swift sad form of divine elation
Under lone Lerici's blue skies.
Your spirit that, like a new Antæus,
Touched earth for strength, but to find it pain;
That like a pale pitying corypheus
Saw tyrant Fate tear Life in twain.

III

And all the longings that led Alastor,
All the long sorrows that Laon bore,
The almighty tortures that could not master
Prometheus whom Jove's vulture tore,
Around you rise as a mist immortal,
The mist of a mind no fear e'er reined,
Whose steed-like thoughts to the very portal
Of Being's boundless abysses gained.

IV

Till, lo, the sea, that is ever avid,
That swept you to death tempestuous,

Seems now to remember, and with gravid
 Billowing grieve, as I stand here thus,
Feeling your song's wild spirit essence
 About me still in the earth and sky,
As a spaceless and elemental presence
 That, till the world does, cannot die!

THE APOSTATE

Julian, the Emperor, enthroned
Apostate o'er the East,
Swore every Christian of his realm
Should die — man, child, or priest.

Arming was he for Parthia:
Returned, it should be done.
Libanus, his rhetorician cried,
“Where now's the Carpenter's son?”

“Making a coffin,” bold replied
A voice in the throng astir,
“Making a coffin, for your lord
Of boasts, the Emperor!”

Julian heard, and Julian went . . .

And Julian came not back.

What shall we say? Christ won the day?

Or — does the moral lack?

SPES MYSTICA

I heard a voice from out the Future crying,

Afar:

“Fear not, fear not, ye children of the earth!

There is in your desire a dream undying —

The Star

It steals from ever shines: wage still your war.

For Time shall clear at last his whither and whence

And when!

And all that is dark shall vanish from your Dream.

And all that is wide shall narrow to your ken,

And then

All that is strong, too strong no more shall seem.

For the great Mystery is only Mist —

Not Night!

And the great space, a spaceless Spell at last.

And the great Power is but your being's Right

And Goal:

You shall attain triumphant to its Whole.

Then will your love be lit with a new flame,

Not shame.

Then will your trust spring only up from Truth.

Then will your courage free of Fear be born,

Some Morn!

Then will age be indeed the aim of youth!

SEA LURE

(The Maine Coast)

It is so, O sea! wild roses
 Bloom here in the scent of thy brine.
And the juniper round them closes,
 And the bays amid them twine,
To guard and to praise their beauty;
 And the gulls above them cry,
And the stern rocks stand on duty,
 Where the surf beats white and high.

It is so, O sea! wild roses,
 With the day-long fog bedrenched,
Have come from their inland closes
 With a thirst for thee unquenched.

And over thy cliffs they clamber,
And over thy vast they gaze;
For the tides of thee can enamour
Even them with their woodland ways.

Yea, the passion of thee and the power
And the largeness are a lure
To even the heart of a flower,
O sea, with a heart unsure!
For love is a thing unsated,
Nor ever in any breast
Has it dwelt, all want abated,
At rest.

BIDDEFORD BAY

(Saco Bay)

Biddeford Bay is gold to-night,
With the sun going down.
The gulls have fled to their island home,
Past Biddeford Port and Town.
All day they have clamored and swung and cried
Like restless spirits born of the tide,
That now comes restful in, and wide,
Its last shrill rock to drown.

Biddeford Bay is gold to-night,
With the sun setting low.
The gulls have fled but the pines send yet
A proudly solemn crow.

A warden is he who has waited long
The last lone cry of the sea-born throng
Ere homeward, too, over marshes strong
 With the tide, he straggles slow.

Biddeford Bay is gold to-night,
 Till the coast-light flashes red;
Then ashen and gray is Biddeford Bay,
 For the sun's last dream is dead.
Yet star over star in the evening sky
Comes telling that day — and delight — may die,
But never the soul's fair hope to fly
 To its rest when life is sped.

THE FISHING OF O-SUSHI

O-Sushi-San in the moonlight fishes,
 On the Inland Sea.
He poles his boat where the soft weed swishes
Under its bow and the ebb-tide wishes,
 O, with what lone lips again
 In the Great Deep to be.

He poles his boat and desire comes to him
 Like the tide to go.
The moonlight wistfully sad steals thro him,
Waking ancestral years that woo him,
 Back, ah back, to the Timeless Deep
 From whence he sprung to woe.

But on he fishes — the moon e'er waning —
 Past the templed gate
Of his near isle, whose shadow staining
All the still sea around seems straining,
 As is his soul, afar to slip
 From its unceasing fate.

And tide and shadow and soul together
 Seem at last to blend
Within his trance, till he knows not whether
Time has not slipped at last its tether,
 Tether of loneliness and pain —
 And lives without an end.

A WOMAN'S REPLY

If he dies whom I love, let me be —
Tell me not to believe.
If he leaves me, I only shall see
I am human, and grieve.

In the grave do not bid me behold
But a God-open door;
For to Love it is earth, it is mould —
Is the grave and no more!

Let me be for a little and then
It may chance that the sod
Shall become to my vision again
As the garment of God.

WATERS WITHHELD

I hear it again —
 The falling leaf;
The wind that has ailed
 Overlong with grief;
The river run dry,
 Like a heart I know;
But I do not sigh,
 I arise — and go —

And to death I say,
 And Decay, "Not yet!"
To the Wind, "I sway,
 But my soul is set."
To the Waters, "Cease,
 If you must — but still
Will I bide, at peace,
 Till your floods refill."

THE SONG OF A NEOPHYTE

(Alexandria, A. D. 500)

The body of Christ, where is it now?

(Winds of the world, tell me!)

They took it down from the black Hill's brow,

Gave it a tomb, as all allow,

It rose, as the twelve, and more, avow.

(Kyrie eleison!)

For forty days, and then to the skies —

(Winds of the world, hear ye?)

'Tis said that it swept, before men's eyes,

Up to a bliss called Paradise.

But of the gods there are many lies.

(Kyrie eleison!)

Up to the stars they saw it wend.

(Winds of the world, did they?)

Never, I fear, but without end

'Tis blown with all other dust to blend.

Let me not tread on it, his friend!

(Kyrie eleison!)

SAPPHO'S DEATH SONG

(On her cliff in Leucady)

What have I gathered the years did not take
from me?

(Swallows, hear, as you fly from the cold!)

Whom have I bound to me never to break from
me?

(Whom, O wind of the wold!)

Whom, O wind! O hunter of spirits!

(Pierce his spirit whose spear is in mine!)

Then let Oblivion loose this ache from me,
Proserpine!

Lyre and the laurel the Muses gave to me,

(Why comes summer when winter is nigh!)

Spent am I now and pain-voices rave to me.

(O the sea and its cry!)

O the sea that has suffered all sorrow!

(Sea of the Delphian tongue ever shrill!)

Nought from the wreck of love can now save to me
Any thrill!

Life that we live passes pale or amorous.

(Tread, O vintagers, grapes in the press!)

Mine's but a prey to Erinnyes clamorous.

(O for wine that will bless!)

Wine that foams, but is free of all madness

(Free, O Cypris, of fury's breath!)

Free as I now shall be, O glamorous
Queen of Death!

THE MASTER

The hounds of the sea are baying
On the trail, o'er the new moon's tide.
Their lips are afoam and swaying,
And the winds behind them ride.
The quarry is up before them,
A ship with her brood of men,
And a frenzy rushes o'er them,
They bite her again and again.

The winter has left them riven,
And the winds have sped them hard,
But back from her bows they are driven,
She scatters them undebarr'd.
For her beams are not wrought of cedar
That crushed in their teeth of yore,

But of steel; and strong fires feed her
And drive her in to the shore.

Yea, man is becoming master
O sea; and in vain thy pack
Shall hunt one day for disaster
And ruin, upon his track:
The master of thee and thy hunters —
For the sky too does he dare —
Supreme o'er all he encounters
In the earth, the sea, and the air.

CIVIL WAR

I loaded my weapon,
Aimed it well;
I shot and a foe
Before me fell.

I passed the place
When the fight was done,
And there lay dead —
My mother's son!

I buried him deep,
But deeper far
Was buried in me
Belief in war.

Yet, such is blood!
I still fought fast,
Till victory came
To my cause at last.

But now that honours
Upon me throng,
I know he was right —
And I was wrong!

MESSAGES

We speed them over the land,
 Illimitably along.
We breathe them under the sea,
 By our cables dark and strong.
We hurl them into the air,
 From shore unto farthest shore,
And soon from mind to quivering mind,
 We yet shall wing them o'er!

And then shall a thousand miles
 Indeed be shorn of its strength,
And God not seem denied
 By the breadth of space and the length.
For if our spirits may fling
 Their power and thought afar,
His soul, it may be, to infinity
 May spring, from star to star.

WHAT PART

In the great drama of the universe
What part plays this our world? —
Of dark impassioned Guilt, to Love a curse?
Of broken-hearted Fool, beliefless whirled?

Is it some Hamlet melancholy cast
Between the planet powers of right and wrong?
Some proud pale Prospero who shall at last
Regain his empire with an Ariel's song?

Or is it but a humble Vassal borne
Upon the infinite Stage
To battle all unhonoured when the horn
Sounds the last tourney Life and Death shall
wage?

THE UNKNOWN SHORE

Storm on an unknown shore,
A light that warns in vain.
Nearer we drive and nearer roar
The reefs: what port's to gain?

Dire is the dark, then, lo,
Swept on across the foam
We lift our eyes at dawn, to know
The port we've made — is home.

MAN

I woke in the night, silent, troubled,
Pained with a sense of near appal.
A shot rang out in the darkness — doubled:
Swift steps ceased in a groan, a fall.

Voices, then, of the Law that serves us.
(O what man must do to man!)
Night again, and the Power that swerves us
On thro Space: O by what plan!

HAUNTED SEAS

A gleaming glassy ocean,
Under a sky of gray;
A tide that dreams of motion,
Or moves, as the dead may;
A bird that dips and wavers
O'er the lone waters round,
Then with a cry that quavers
Is gone — a spectral sound.

The brown sad sea-weed drifting
Far from the land, and lost.
The faint warm fog unlifting,
The derelict long-tossed,
But now at rest — tho haunted
By the death-scenting shark,
Whose prey no more undaunted
Slips from it, spent and stark.

CONVICTS

(In a mine disaster)

Down a black hole in the earth they toil —
Men like you and me;
Prisoners sullen and fierce with soil —
Serfs, to keep us free.
Down a black hole they dig — and rot:
In sunlessness, a swarm forgot.
Sudden a flash — and they are not.
Now what grief shall be?

Why, not one, they are convicts, these.
Strangled in their stripes.
Never a tear for their destinies
From an eye love wipes.

Never a sob — do you hear, O God? —

As they are tumbled under the sod!

Prisoners are they now of the clod —

That forever gripes!

WHO RESTS NOT

Peace, hot heart,
Lie in your nest!
Life's wing breaks if it fails of rest.
Work is good,
And achievement better —
But they too may the soul enetter.
And free, free it should ever be,
Free tho its aim be skies immortal.
Peace then, heart,
And be done with doing:
Who rests not but arrives at rueing.

THE UNHONOURED

(In Westminster Abbey)

Mothering fane of the great English dead
Who lie immortal in thy transept tomb,
Where falls upon their fame the gloried gloom
Of windows that rain radiance overhead,
I would there were no missing presences
To grieve me in thy mighty organ's peal —
No poets exiled by the tyrant heel
Of cursèd Custom's blind obduracies.
For all too great for littleness thou art,
And they who shut from thee a rightful son
Shut also out a portion of God's heart,
A portion of that Spirit which is one
With aspiration, and the world's intent
To prize all beauty as divinely sent.

AT LINCOLN, ENGLAND

The swallow and the rook swing
About the old cathedral tower:

Softly falls the twilight,

Softly float the clouds.

The chimes above the roof peal

The travail of the passing hour,

Peal, and then are hushed in silence-shrouds.

The glimmerings of pane-lights

Are coming fast about the close,

Fast about the cloister,

Fast about the nave.

The hearth-lights, the home-lights,

That tell of ancient joys and woes

Linked between the cradle and the grave.

The swallow and the rook cease,
And swift into the tower throng.
Starrily the skies stray,
Starry overhead.
A husht and solemn peace hangs,
A memory of even-song,
Sung above the long-enhallowed dead.

BUOYS

A buoy on the billows
A dipping gull,
A wind that is glad,
A sail that is taut.
A sky that is blue
And a sea blue-clad —
With a tide song-fraught!

A tide that shall bring me
Upon its flow
The breath of all life,
Its sweetest boon —
The power to hear
Above world-deep strife
God's growing Tune.

VOICES AT THE VEIL

I rent the veil that hangs between
The living and the dead,
And cried aloud, "Why have ye left
Us here uncomforted!

"Why do ye never speak nor come
Again to ease our hearts?
It were a little thing for love
To do, when it departs!"

Then thro the veil a voice blew back,
"Come? we forever come!
Scarce have we crossed the Silence ere
We hear again time's hum

“And turn again to enter it;
But ye are blind nor see
That children come from where we are:
Lo, I your child shall be.”

The veil fell back. And then the child
Came and I searched its face,
To find — the Mystery again;
Of Death no other trace.

TO SEA!

Give me the tiller! up with the sail!
Now let her swing to the breeze.
Out to sea with a dripping rail,
To sea, with a heart at ease!

Out of the Harbour! out of the Bay!
Out by the valiant Light,
Out by rocks where the young gulls lay —
And glad winds teach them flight!

Out of the Harbour! out of the Bay!
Out to the open sea!
O there's not in the world a way
To feel so wildly free!

So, let her quiver! So, let her leap!

So, let her dance the foam!

All life else is a narrow keep,

The sea alone is home!

ON IROQUOIS HILL

(To A. H. R.)

The rustling dreams
Of the leaves in sleep
As the wakeful wind goes by
Are like the thoughts
That stir in me
As you sit by me and sigh.
With your hand in mine,
And your heart in mine,
And the summer moon in heaven,
And the whip-poor-will
Who is fain to fill
The wood with lyric leaven.

With your hand in mine!
And your heart in mine!
And the homeless sea of Night,
In which we two
Feel time pass thro
With universal flight.
And follow him
To the hither rim
Of uncreated space;
Where the wind is still,
As is God's will,
In which our love finds place.

SUFFICINGS

(To A. H. R.)

Day for the mind,
But night for the soul.
Sun for delight,
But moon to console.
Song for the glad,
But silence for rest.
God for the world —
But you for my breast!

RECOMPENSE

(To A. H. R.)

Not if I chose from a world of days
 Could I find a day like this.
The sky is a wreath of azure haze
 And the sea an azure bliss.
The surf runs racing the young salt wind,
 Shouting without a fear
O'er reef and bar, o'er cliff and scaur,
 Where you and I lie near.

O you and I who have watched the sky
 And sea from many a shore!
You, love, and I who will live and die —
 And watch the sea no more!

O joy of the world! Joy of love,
Joy that can say to death,
“Tho you end all with your wanton pall,
We two have had this breath!”

VANISHINGS

What went from me,
As the bird I watched
 Vanisht in yonder cloud?
Its flight was fair and swift and free,
 On the wind that blew aloud.

What went from me?
For my heart hangs now
 Heavier than the sky.
In it gray clouds, as of destiny,
 Seem driving by and by.

What went from me?
O life! O time!
 O vanishings! O pain!
O death! O breath of eternity,
 That cannot bring them again!

GALILEO

*(Dying, to his friends — after many penalties under
the Inquisition for his astronomical beliefs)*

So be it, the priest shall come,
Since you fear, with the Eucharist!
I recant again. I will eat —
And drink — of the Bread, the Wine.
But then ere the night grows numb,
Ere the end draws near me, the Mist
Shall enswathe, and I would complete
One thought more. Do the stars shine?

A heretic? Well, the Church
Has her will. But Copernicus
Saw a great truth for all that:
And yet I am troubled still!

The sun, that he found, by search,
To be lord of our day and us,
Is so! but he paused thereat:
There's more to be said by who will!

There's more to be said by who dares . . .
But nay, do not fear, I am old
And blind — so others must speak,
And suffer the Church's ban.
Infinity there unbares;
The earth and the planets have told
But a word: some braver will seek
How the heavens themselves began!

A blasphemy, that? Not so,
For motion and force are God's,
Tho in them is hidden the thought
That eludes me, even to death.
How earth draws the moon I know,
And how great Jupiter plods,

With satellites to him caught —
As if by an indrawn breath!

That indrawn breath, is it one
Between all things cast upon space?
The stone that I fling and the star
Fall yielding alike to its will?
Does the Universe so run?
God give me a year of grace
And yet I shall pierce afar
Into that . . . for it needs but skill.

The holy Wine and the Bread?
They are come? . . . yea, I believe —
In Christ and the Virgin too,
So now . . . be ever at ease.
In the Church at Pisa o'erhead
Swung the pendulous light . . . receive
My discoveries, God, thou who
Gave the first to me there on my knees!

For if Thou hast sent thy Word
To the Church Thou hast sent us too
The heavens and all their scroll
For men with their minds to read.
So where a truth I averred
Of stars is to Thee untrue.
Lay it not, O God, to my soul
That I trusted both in my need!

AT THE END

When it is done,
The laughter and weeping;
 When the heart hushes,
 When the brain stills;
When I lie down
For Silence and Sleeping,
O let it be, at last, on the hills!

On the high hills
Where gladly to wander
 Is my delight,
 As the wind knows;
Where without tomb
For any to ponder
I may, still facing the stars, repose.

A NIGHT IN AVIGNON

PREFACE

This play was first published in 1907. For its place in a group of three Renaissance dramas see the preface to "Porzia."

C. Y. R.

To
DONALD ROBERTSON

CHARACTERS

FRANCESCO PETRARCA	<i>A Young Poet and Scholar</i>
GHERARDO	<i>His Brother, a Monk</i>
LELLO	<i>His Friend</i>
ORSO	<i>His Servant</i>
FILIPPA	} <i>Ladies of light life in Avignon</i>
SANCIA.	
MADONNA LAURA	

A NIGHT IN AVIGNON

SCENE: *A room in the chambers of PETRARCA at Avignon. It opens on a loggia overlooking, on higher ground, the spired church of Santa Clara and the gray cloisters of a Carthusian monastery. Beyond lie the city walls under glamour of the blue Provençal night.*

The room, faintly frescoed, is lighted with many candles; some glittering on a wine-table heavy with wines toward the right front. A door on the left leads to other rooms, and an arched one opposite, down to the street. Bookshelves and a writing-desk strewn with a lute and writings are also on the left; a crimson couch is in the centre; and garlands of myrtle and laurel deck the wine-table.

GHERARDO, *the monk, is seated by the desk, following with severe looks the steps of PETRARCA, who is walking feverishly to and fro.*

Gherardo (after a pause). Listen. Another word, Francesco.

Petrarca. Aih!

And then another—that will breed another.

Gherardo. Dote on this Laura still—if still you must:

Woman's your destiny.

But quench these lights and set away that wine.

Petrarca. And to no other lips turn? hers denied me?

Never, Gherardo!

Gherardo. Virtue bids you.

Petrarca. Vainly!

I've borne until I will not . . . For it is
Two years now since in the aisles
Of Santa Clara yonder my heart first
Went from me on mad wings.

Two years this April morning
Since it fell fluttering before her feet . . .
As she stood there beside our blessed Lady,
Gowned as young Spring in green and violets! . . .

Gherardo. And these two years have been inviolate;

Your life as pure as hers,
As virgin—
Save for the songs you've sung to her; those songs
This idle city echoes with. But now—

Petrarca. Now I will open all the gates to
Pleasure!

To rosy Pleasure—warm, unspiritual,
Ready to spring
Into the arms of all
Whom bloodless Virtue pales.
For, of restraint and hoping, I have drunk
But a vintage of tears!
And what has been my gain?

Gherardo. Her chastity.

Petrarca. A chastity unchallenged of desire—

And therefore none!

Aih, none!

For, were it other;

Could I aver that once, that ever once

Her lids had fallen low in fear of love,

I'd bid the desert of my heart burn dry—

To the last oasis—

With resignation!

But never have they, never! and I'm mad.

[Pours out wine.]

Gherardo. And you will seek to cure it with more
madness?

To cast the devil of love out of your veins

With other love and lower!

Petrarca. Yes, yes, yes!

[Drinks.]

With little Sancia's!

Whose soul is a sweet sin!

Who lives but for this life and asks of Death

Only a breath of time before he ends it,

To tell three beads and fill her mouth with *aves*.

Just for enough, she says,

“To tell God that He made me”—as He did.

Gherardo. And to blaspheme with! O obsessèd
man.

[*Has risen, flushed.*]

But you will fail! For this vain revelry
Will ease not. And I see all love is base—
As say the Fathers—
All! . . . and the body of woman
Is vile from the beginning.

Petrarca.

Monkish lies!

[*Drinks again for courage.*]

The body of woman's born of bliss and beauty.
Only one thing is fairer—that's her soul.

Gherardo. And is that Word which says thou
shalt not look

Upon another's wife a monkish lie?

[*Silence.*]

Your Laura is another's.

Petrarca (torn).

As I found!

After my heart became a poison flame—

Within me!

A fierce inquisitor against my peace!

After I followed her from Santa Clara,

That mass-hour,

To an escutcheoned door!

After and not before . . . And such another's!

Ugo di Sade's!

A beast whose sullen mind two thoughts would
 drain;

Whose breath is a poltroon's;

Who is unkind. . . . I've seen her weep; who
 loves

Her not. . . . And yet the fane of song I
 frame her,

The love I burn on it, she laughs away.

To hide her own? . . . I will not so believe.

Gherardo. Nor should you.

Petrarca. Yet you bid me quarry still

The deeps of me to shrine her?

And be Avignon's laughter?

A mock, a titter on the tongue of geese

That gad the city gates?

A type of fools that sigh while others kiss?

“Francesco Petrarca!

Who never clasped his mistress—but in a sonnet!

Who fills empty canzone with his passion—

But never her ears!

Never!—though she was wed against her will

To an unlettered boor out bartering—

One whom she well could leave!” . . .

I’ll not, Gherardo! . . . Sonnets?

[Tears several from desk.

Vain, all! . . .

[Casts them away.

But Lello comes! and brings me Sancia!

Filippa! merry Filippa and Sancia!

We’ll drink!—wine of Rocella!

Wine of the Rhine! Bielna! San Porciano!—

And kiss!

[Throws back his head.

Kiss with the lips of life and not of . . .

[A knell has begun to beat from the church without. He hears it, and, awed, sinks, crossing himself, to the couch.]

[GHERARDO, exalted, shudders.]

Gherardo. It is the knell of Matteo Banista,
Whose soul is gone for its licentious days
Upon steep purgatory.

[Prepares to go.]

Your sin be on you . . . and it will.

Petrarca (fearful).

No! . . . no!

[Starts up.]

But hear, Gherardo, hear!

[His words come stifled.]

There in the cloister have you peace—in prayer?

In visions—penances? . . .

Swear that you have! swear to me! once! . . .

but once!

And I . . . ! . . .

No, never! . . . never!

[He wipes his brow.]

While we are in the world the world's in us.
 The Holy Church I own—
 Confess her Heaven's queen;
 But we are flesh and all things that are fair
 God made us to enjoy—
 Or, high in Paradise, we'll know but sorrow.
 You though would ban earth's beauty,
 Even the torch of Glory
 That kindled Italy once and led great Greece—
 The torch of Plato, Homer, Virgil, all
 The sacred bards and sages, pagan-born!
 I love them! they are divine!
 And so to-night . . . ! . . .

[Voices.

They! it is Lello! Lello! Sancia!—

[Hears a lute and laughter below, then a call,

“Sing, Sancia”; then SANCIA singing:

To the maids of Saint Remy

All the gallants go for pleasure;

To the maids of Saint Remy—

Tripping to love's measure!

To the dames of Avignon

All the masters go for wiving;

To the dames of Avignon—

That shall be their shriving!

[He goes to the loggia as they gayly applaud. Then LELLO cries:

Lello. Ho-ho! Petrarca! Pagan! are you in?

What! are you, sonnet-monger?

Petrarca.

Ai, ai, aih!

[Motions GHERARDO—who goes.

Lello. Come then! Your door is locked! down!
let us in!

[Rattles it.

Petrarca. No, ribald! hold! the key is on the sill!
Look for it and ascend!

[ORSO enters.

Stay, here is Orso!

[The old servant goes through and down the stairs to meet them. In a moment the tramp of feet is heard and they enter—LELLO between them—singing:

Guelph! Guelph! and Ghibbeline!
 Ehyo! ninni! onni! ōnz!
 I went fishing on All Saints' Day
 And—caught but human bones!

I went fishing on All Saints' Day.
 The Rhone ran swift, the wind blew black!
 I went fishing on All Saints' Day—
 But my love called me back!

She called me back and she kissed my lips—
 Oh, my lips! Oh, onni! ōnz!
 "Better take life than death," said she,
 Better take love than—bones! bones!

[SANCIA *kisses* PETRARCA.

"Better take love than bones."

[*They scatter with glee and* PETRARCA *seizes*

SANCIA *to him.*

Petrarca. Yes, little Sancia! and you, my friends!
 Warm love is better, better!
 And braver! Come, Lello! give me your hand!

And you, Filippa! No, I'll have your lips!

Sancia (interposing). Or—less? One at a time,
Messer Petrarca!

You learn too fast. Mine only for to-night.

Petrarca. And for a thousand nights, Sancia fair!

Sancia. You hear him? Santa Madonna! pour
us wine,

To pledge him in!

Petrarca. The tankards bubble o'er!

[*They go to the table.*]

And see, they are wreathed of April,

With loving myrtle and laurel intertwined.

We'll hold symposium, as bacchanals!

Sancia. And that is—what? some dull and silly
show

Out of your sallow books?

Petrarca. Those books were writ

With ink of the gods, my Sancia, upon

Papyri of the stars!

Sancia. And—long ago?

Ha! long ago?

Petrarca. Returnless centuries.

Sancia (contemptuously). Who loves the past,
loves mummies and their dust—

And he shall mould!

Who loves the future loves what may not be,
And feeds on fear.

Only one flower has Time—its name is Now!
Come, pluck it! pluck it!

Lello. *Brava, maid! the Now!*

Sancia (dancing). Come, pluck it! pluck it!

Petrarca. By my soul, I will!

[Seizes her again.]

It grows upon these lips—and if to-night
They leant out over the brink of Hell, I would.

[She breaks from him.]

Filippa. Enough! the wine! the wine!

Sancia. O ever-thirsty

And ever-thrifty Pippa! Well, pour out!

[She lifts a brimming cup.]

We'll drink to Messer Petrarca—

Who's weary of his bed-mate, Solitude.

May he long revel in the courts of Venus!

All (drinking). Aih, long!

Petrarca. As long as Sancia enchants them!

Filippa. I'd trust him not, Sancia. Put him to oath.

Sancia. And, to the rack, if faithless? This Filippa!

Messer Petrarca, should she not be made
High Jurisconsult to our lord, the Devil,
Whose breath of life is oaths? . . .
But, swear it! . . . by the Saints!
Who were great sinners all!
And by the bones of every monk or nun
Who ever darkened the world!

Lello.

Or ever shall!

[*A pause.*]

Petrarca. I'll swear your eyes are singing
Under the shadow of your hair, mad Sancia,
Like nightingales in the wood.

Sancia.

Pah! Messer Poet . . .

Such words as those you vent without an end—

To the Lady Laura!

Petrarca. Stop! [*Grows pale.*

Not *her* name—here!

[*All have sat down; he rises.*

Sancia. O-ho! this air will soil it? and it might
Not sound so sweet in sonnets ever after?

[*To the rest—rising:*

Shall we depart, that he may still indite them?

“To Laura—On the Vanity of Passion”?

“To Laura—Unrelenting”?

“To Laura—Whose Departing Darkens the Sky”?

[*Laughs.*

“To Laura—Who Deigns Not a Single Tear”?

[*ORSO enters.*

Shall we depart?

Lello. Peace! *Sancia.*

Sancia. Ah-ha!

[*Moves away.*

Petrarca (*still tensely—to ORSO*). Speak.

Orso. Sir, you are desired.

Petrarca. By whom?

Orso. Her veil

Was lifted and she told me:

Therefore I say it out—Madonna Laura.

[*All stare, amazed. Silence.*]

Petrarca (hoarsely). What lie is this!

Orso. I am too old to lie.

Sancia (laughing). Who was the goddess that
his books tell of,

The cold one so long chaste, but who at last——

Lello. Be silent, Sancia! Francesco . . . what?

Petrarca (to ORSO). Lead Monna Laura here—

[*ORSO goes.*]

If it is she! . . .

But you, my friends, must know how strange
this is,

And how—! . . . I have no words! . . .

Wait me, I pray you, yonder, in that chamber.

[*They go, left, SANCIA shrugging. Then
ORSO brings LAURA, whom PETRARCA
is helpless to greet, and who falters—
yet nobly determining, comes down.*]

Laura. Messer Petrarca, . . . I have been
impelled

To come . . . and as the purest should, boldly,
With lifted veil, to say . . .

Petrarca. Lady!

Laura. To say—

With gratitude I cannot give another . . .

For life to a woman is but resignation,

And that at last is shame . . .

Petrarca. At last . . . shame—

Laura. To say—Love is to us as light to the lilies
That lean by Mont Ventoux:

The love of one pure man for one pure woman.

Petrarca (dazed). Lady! . . .

Laura. Yes, and—I've been
unkind to you.

Ungentle ever.

[*Shakes her head.*

But there's no other way sometimes for those
Who would be wholly true.

And yet . . . do I owe *any* truth to *him*?

Petrarca. To—Ugo di Sade?

Laura (bitterly). Who is called my husband?
How I was bound to him, you know! and how
I've dwelt and have endured more than his bursts
Of burning cruelty. For still, I thought,
He is my husband!
And still—He is my husband! . . .
But now no more I think it—oh! no more!
Too visible it is
That he belongs to any—who sell love.
So I may innocently say to you
Who for two years have sung my name and suffered,
Yet never once have turned unto another—

[PETRARCA *pales.*

I well may say . . .

[*Stopped by his manner.*

There's something that you . . . Ah!

[*Sees, stricken, his grief and shame. Then
her glance goes round the room and falls
on the wine-table . . . Then SAN-
CIA is heard within:*

Sancia. Well, well, Messer Petrarca! How long
will

You shut us in this dark—that is as black
As old Pope John the twenty-second's soul?
A pretty festa, this!

Petrarca (brokenly). Merciless God!

*[Falls abased before LAURA'S look, tortured
with remorse.*

O lady, what have I done beyond repair! . . .

[She gathers her veil.

What have I lost within this gulf of shame!
For a paltry pleasure have I sold my dream,
Whose pinions would have lifted you at last?

Laura (very pale). I did not know, Messer Pe-
trarca, you

Had friends awaiting.

[Pauses numbly.

I came to-night, as first I would have said,
With holy gratitude—
For a love I thought you gave.
With gratitude that honor well could speak,

I thought, and yet be honor;
 With gratitude forgetful of all else . . .
 And trusting . . . But no matter:
 All trust shall be embalmed and laid away.
 I go with pity; seeing
 My husband—is even as other men.

*[She passes to the door and out: PETRARCA
 moans. Then LELLO enters and comes
 to him anxiously.]*

Lello. Francesco!

Petrarca. Lello!

[Dazed.]

Lello! Have I dreamed?

[Rising, with anguish.]

Did Laura come to me out of the night—
 Come as the first voice breaking beyond death
 To one despairing? . . .
 And was I lifted up to Heaven's dawn?
 And then . . .

[Reels.]

God! am I falling . . . ? shall I ever . . . ?

Down this . . . ? . . . My friend stay with
me!

No, go . . . and take them with you—Sancia
—all! . . .

I have slain the Spring forever!

The green of the whole fair world! . . . O
Laura! Laura!

*[Sinks down on the couch and buries his face
in his arms. LELLO goes sorrowfully
out.]*

CURTAIN

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YOLANDA OF CYPRUS

FIRST PUBLISHED 1908

To
IDA M. TARBELL
WITH AFFECTIONATE ADMIRATION

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ACT I

CHARACTERS

RENIER LUSIGNAN	. .		<i>A Descendant of the Lusignan Kings of Cyprus</i>
BERENGERE	. . . .		<i>His Wife</i>
AMAURY	. . . .		<i>His Son, Commander of Famagouste under the Venetians</i>
YOLANDA	. . . .		<i>The Ward of Berengere, betrothed to Amaury</i>
CAMARIN	. . . .		<i>A Baron of Paphos, Guest in the Lusignan Castle</i>
VITTIA PISANI	. . . .		<i>A Venetian Lady, also a Guest</i>
MORO	. . . .		<i>A Priest</i>
HASSAN	. . . .		<i>Warden of the Castle</i>
HALIL	. . . .		<i>His Son, a Boy</i>
TREMITUS	. . . .		<i>A Physician</i>
OLYMPIO	. . . .		<i>A Greek Boy, serving Amaury</i>
ALESSA	. . . .	}	<i>Berengere's Women</i>
MAGA		
CIVA		
MAURIA		
SMARDA	. . . .		<i>Slave to Vittia</i>
PIETRO	. . . .		<i>In Vittia's pay</i>

Priests, Acolytes, etc.

TIME—*The Sixteenth Century*

PLACE—*The Island of Cyprus*

YOLANDA OF CYPRUS

SCENE: *A dim Hall, of blended Gothic and Saracenic styles, in the Lusignan Castle, on the island of Cyprus near Famagouste. Around the walls, above faint frescoes portraying the deliverance of Jerusalem by the Crusaders, runs a frieze inlaid with the coats-of-arms of former Lusignan kings. On the left, and back, is a door hung with heavy damask, and in the wall opposite, another. Farther down on the right a few steps, whose railing supports a Greek vase with jasmine, lead through a chapel to the sleeping apartments. In the rear, on either side, are guled lattice windows, and in the centre an open grated door, looking upon a loggia, and, across the garden below, over the moonlit sea. Seats are placed about, and, forward, a divan with rich Turkish coverings.*

A table with a lighted cross-shaped candlestick is by the door, left; and a lectern with a book on it, to the front, right. As the curtain rises, the Women, except CIVA, lean wearily on the divan, and HALIL near is singing dreamily:

Ah, the balm, the balm,
 And ah, the blessing
 Of the deep fall of night
 And of confessing.
 Of the sick soul made white
 Of all distressing:
 Made white! . . .
 Ah, balm of night
 And, ah the blessing!

[The music falls and all seem yielding to sleep. Suddenly there are hoof-beats and sounds at the gates below. HALIL springs up.]

Halil. Alessa! Maga! Voices at the gates!

[All start up.]

Some one is come.

Alessa. Boy, Halil, who?

Halil. Up, up!

Perhaps lord Renier—No: I will learn.

[He runs to curtains and looks.

It is Olympio! Olympio!

From Famagouste and lord Amaury!

Mauria. Ah!

And comes he here?

Halil. As he were lord of skies!
To lady Yolanda, by my lute!

Maga. Where is she?

Alessa. I do not know; perhaps, her chamber.

Mauria. Stay:

His word may be of the Saracens.

Halil (calling). Oho!

*[He admits OLYMPIO, who enters insolently
down. All press round him gaily.*

Mauria. Well, what, Olympio, from Fama-
gouste?

What tidings? tell us.

Maga. See, his sword!

Olympio. Stand off.

Mauria. The tidings, then, the tidings!

Olympio. None—for women.

Mauria. So-ho, my Cupid? None of the Saracens?

Of the squadron huddling yesterday for haven

At Keryneia?

Olympio. Who has told you?

Mauria. Who?

A hundred galleys westing up the wind,

Scenting the shore, but timorous as hounds.

A gale—and twenty down!

Maga. The rest are flown?

Olympio. Ask Zeus, or ask, to-morrow, lord
Amaury,

Or, if he comes, to-night. To lady Yolanda

I'm sent and not to tattle, silly, here.

[He starts off, but is arrested by laughter within. It is CIVA who enters, holding up a parchment.]

O! Only Civa.

[Starts again with HALIL.

Civa.

How, Olympio!

Stay you, and hear!—May never virgin love him!

Gone as a thistle! (*turns*).

Mauria.

Pouf! (*laughs*).

Alessa (to CIVA).

Now what have you?

Civa. Verses! found in the garden. Verses!
verses!

On papyrus of Paphos. O, to read!

But you, Alessa—!

Alessa (takes them).

In the garden?

Civa.

By

The fountain cypress, at the marble feet

Of chaste Diana!

Maga.

Where Sir Camarin

And oft our lady—!

Civa.

Maga, will you prattle?

Read them to us, Alessa, read them, read.

They are of love!

Maga.

No, sorrow.

Civa. O, as a nun
 You ever sigh for sorrow!—They are of love!
 Of princes bursting through enchanted bounds
 To ladies prisoned in an ogre's keep!
 Then of the bridals!—O, they are of love!

Maga. No, Civa, no!—of sorrow! see, her lips!

[She points to ALESSA, who, reading, has paled.]

See, see!

Civa. Alessa!

Alessa. Maga—Civa—Ah!

[She rends the parchment.]

Mauria. What are you doing?

Alessa. They were writ to *her*!

Mauria. To her? to whom? what are you saying? Read!

Read us the verses.

Alessa. No.

Mauria. Tell then his name

Who writes them, and to whom.

Alessa. I will not.

Mauria. Then

It is some guilt you hide!—And touching her
You dote on—lady Yolanda!

Alessa. Shame!

Mauria. Some guilt
Of one, then, in this castle!—See, her lips
Betray it is.

Maga. No, Mauria! no! no! (*holds her*) hush!

[*Forms appear without.*]

Mauria. O, loose me.

Maga. There, on the loggia! Hush, see—
Our lady and Sir Camarin.

Alessa (fearful). It is. . . .

They heard us, Maga?

Maga. No, but—

Mauria (to ALESSA). So? that mouse?

Alessa. You know not, Mauria, what thing you
say.—

He is troubling her; be still.

[*Stepping out as BERENGERE enters.*]

My lady?

Berengere (*unwillingly*). Yes.

It is time, now, for your lamps,
And for your aves and o'erneeded sleep.
But first I'd know if yet lord Renier—

[*Sees ALESSA'S face.*

Why are you pale?

Alessa. I?

Berengere. So—and strange.

Alessa. We have

But put away the distaff and the needle.

CAMARIN enters.

Berengere. The distaff and the needle—it may
be.

And yet you do not seem—

Alessa. My lady—?

Berengere. Go.

And send me Hassan.

[*The women leave.*

Camarin—you saw?

They were not as their wont is.

Camarin. To your eyes,
My Berengere, that apprehension haunts.
They were as ever. Then be done with fear!

Berengere. I cannot.

Camarin. To the abyss with it. To-night
Is ours—Renier tarries at Famagouste—
Is ours for love and for a long delight!

Berengere. Whose end may be—

Camarin. Dawn and the dewy lark!
And passing of all presage from you.

Berengere (sits). No:
For think, Yolanda's look when by the cypress
We read the verses! And my dream that I
Should with a cross—inscrutable is sleep!—
Bring her deep bitterness.

Camarin. Dreams are a brood
Born of the night and not of destiny.
She guesses not our guilt, and Renier
Clasps to his breast ambition as a bride—
Ambition for Amaury.

Berengere. None can say.
 He's much with this Venetian, our guest,
 Though Venice gyves us more with tyranny
 Than would the Saracen.

Camarin. But through this lady
 Of the Pisani, powerful in Venice,
 He hopes to lift again his dynasty
 Up from decay; and to restore this island,
 This verdure-dream of the seas, unto his house.
 'Tis clear, my Berengere!

Berengere. Then, *her* design?
 And, the requital that entices her?

[*Rises.*

Evil will come of it, to us some evil,
 Or to Yolanda and Amaury's love.—
 But, there; the women.

Camarin. And too brief their stay.
 What signal for to-night?

Berengere. Be in the garden.
 Over the threshold yonder I will wave
 The candle-sign, when all are passed to sleep.

Camarin. And with the beam I shall mount up
to you

Quicker than ecstasy.

Berengere. I am as a leaf
Before the wind and raging of your love.
Go—go.

Camarin. But to return unto your breast!

[He leaves her by the divan.

*[The women re-enter with silver lighted
lamps; behind them are HASSAN and
the slave SMARDA. They wait for
BERENGERE, who has stood silent, to
speak.*

Berengere (looking up). Ah, you are come; I
had forgotten.

And it is time for sleep.—Hassan, the gates:

Close them.

Hassan. And chain them, lady?

Berengere. Wait no longer.

Lord Renier will not come.

Hassan. No word of him?

Berengere. None, though he yesterday left
Nicosie

With the priest Moro.

Hassan. Lady—

Berengere. Wait no longer.
Come, women, with your lamps and light the way.

[*The women go by the steps. BERENGERE follows.*]

Hassan (staring after her). The reason of this
mood in her? the reason?

Something is vile. Lady Yolanda weeps
In secret; all for what? By God! the Paphian?
Or she of Venice? (*sees SMARDA*). Now slave!
Scythian!

Why do you linger?

Smarda. I am bidden—(*snarls*) by
My mistress.

Hassan. Spa! Thy mistress hath, I think,
Something of hell in her and has unpacked
A portion in this castle. Is it so?

Smarda. My lady is of Venice.

Hassan. Strike her, God.

Her smirk admits it.

Smarda. Touch me not!

Hassan. I'll wring

Your tongue out sudden, if it now has lies.

What of your lady and lord Renier?

Smarda. Off!

RENIER enters behind, with MORO.

Hassan. Your lady and lord Renier, I say!

What do they purpose?

Smarda. Fool-born! look around.

Hassan. Not till——

Smarda. Lord Renier, help.

Hassan. What do you say?

[Turns, and stares amazed.

A fool I am . . .

Renier. Where is my wife?

Hassan. Why, she . . .

This slave stung me to pry.

Renier. Where is my wife?

Hassan. A moment since she left—the women
with her.

She asked for your return.

Renier. And wherefore did?

Hassan. You jeer me.

Renier. Answer.

Hassan. Have you not been gone?

Renier. Not—overfar. Where is Yolanda?—
Well?

No matter; find my chamber till I come.

Of my arrival, too, no word to any.

[*HASSAN goes, confused.*

You, Moro, have deferred me; now, I move.

Whether it is suspicion eats in me,

Mistrust and fret and doubt—of whom I say not,

Or whether desire, and unsubduable,

To see Amaury sceptred—I care not.

[*To SMARDA.*

Slave, to your lady who awaits me, say

I'm here and how have chosen.

Moro.

Do not!

Renier.

Chosen.

[SMARDA goes.]

None can be great who will not hush his heart
To hold a sceptre, and Amaury must.
He is Lusignan and his lineage
Will drown in him Yolanda's loveliness.

Moro. It will not.

Renier. Then at least I shall uncover
What this Venetian hints.

Moro. Sir?

Renier. I must know.

Moro. 'Tis of your wife?—Yolanda?

Renier. Name them not.
They've shut me from their souls.

Moro. My lord, not so;
But you repulse them.

Renier. When they pity. No,
Something has gone from me or never was
Within my breast. I love not—am unlovable.
Amaury is not so.
And this Venetian Vittia Pisani—

Moro. Distrust her!

Renier. She has power.

Moro. But not truth.

And yesterday a holy relic scorned.

Renier. She loves Amaury. Wed to her he will
Be the elected Governor of Cyprus.

The throne, then, but a step.

Moro. But all too great.

And think; Yolanda is to him as heaven:

He will not yield her.

Renier. Then he must. And she,
The Venetian, has ways to it—a secret
To wrench her from his arms.

Moro. Sir, sir?—of what?

Renier. I know not, of some shame.

Moro. Shame!

Renier. Why do you clutch me?

Moro. I—am a priest—and shame—

Renier. You show suspicions.

[VITTIA enters unnoted.]

Of whom?—Of whom, and what?

And offer me irrevocable aid
To win Amaury?

Renier. All is vain in me
Before the fever for it.

Vittia. Then, I shall.
It must be done. My want is unafraid.
Hourly I am expecting out of Venice
Letters of power.
And what to you I pledge is he shall be
Ruler of Cyprus and these Mediterranean
Blue seas that rock ever against its coast.
That do I pledge . . . but more.

Renier. Of rule? . . . Then what?

Vittia (going up to him). Of shame withheld
—dishonor unrevealed.

[As he recoils.]

Hush! there are steps.

[The slave re-enters.]

Smarda?

Smarda (quickly). My lady!

Vittia. Speak.

Smarda. I've erred; she's not asleep.

Vittia. Who?—Ah! Yolanda?

Smarda. Yes; she is coming!

Renier. Ha!

Vittia. My lord——!

Renier. I'll stay,

Stay and confront her.

Vittia. Ignorantly? No.

Renier. I'll question her.

Vittia. Blindly, and peril all?

Renier. I will return. You put me off, and off.

[By the loggia, with MORO, he goes; the slave slips out. YOLANDA enters, sadly, her gaze on the floor. She walks slowly, but becoming conscious starts, sees VITTIA, and turns to withdraw.]

Vittia. Your pardon—

Yolanda. I can serve you?

Vittia. If you seek
The women, they are gone.

Yolanda. I do not seek them.

Vittia. Nor me?

Yolanda. Nor any.—Yet I would I might
With seeking penetrate the labyrinth
Of your intent.

Vittia. I thank you. And you shall,
To-night—if you have love.

Yolanda. That thread were vain.

Vittia. I say, if you have love.

Yolanda. Of guile?

Vittia. Of her
You hold as mother, and who is Amaury's.

Yolanda. Were it so simple, all designs that
ever
Laired in you, would to my eyes have been as clear
As shallows under Morpha's crystal wave.

Vittia. Unproven you speak so.

Yolanda. And proven would.

Vittia. If so, then—save her.

Yolanda. Who? What do you—? (*stops*).

Vittia (*with irony*). Mean?

It is not clear?

Yolanda. Save her?

Vittia. The surety flies

Out of your cheek and dead upon your heart:

Yet you are innocent—oh innocent!—

O'er what abyss she hangs!

Yolanda. O'er no abyss.

Vittia. But to her lord is constant!

Yolanda (*desperate*). She is constant.

Vittia. And to his bed is true!

Yolanda. True.

Vittia. And this baron

Of Paphos—Camarin—is but her *friend*,

And deeply yours—as oft you feign to shield her?

Yolanda. He is no more.

Vittia. Your heart belies your lips,
Knows better than believing what you say.

Yolanda. Were, were he then . . . (*struggles*)

lord Renier knows it not!

And never must. I have misled his thought
From her to me. The danger thus may pass,
The open shame.

Sir Camarin departed, her release
From the remorse and fettering will seem
Sweet as a vista into fairyland.
For none e'er will betray her.

Vittia.

None?

Yolanda.

Your tone . . . !

(*Realising.*) The still insinuation! You would
do it!

This is the beast then of the labyrinth!
And this your heart is!

Vittia.

No, not ever: no.

But *now*, if you deny me.

Yolanda.

Speak as a woman,

If there is womanhood in you to speak.

The name of Berengere Lusignan must

Go clean unto the years, fair and unsullied.

Nor must the bloody leap

Of death fall on her from lord Renier's sword,

A death too ready if he but suspect.

No, she is holy! . . .

And holy are my lips

Remembering that they may call her mother!

All the bright world I breathe because of her,

Laughter and roses, day-song of the sea,

Not bitterness and loneliness and blight!

All the bright world, —

Of voices, dear as waking to the dead—

Voices of love and tender earthly hopes—

O, all the beauty I was once forbid!

For O!—

She lifted me, a lonely convent weed,

A cloister thing unvisited of dew,

Withering and untended and afar

From the remembered ruin of my home,

And here has planted me in happiness.

Then, for her, all I am!

Vittia.

Or—hope to be?

Yolanda. The price, say, of your silence.—I am
weary.

Vittia. And would be rid of me.

Yolanda. The price, the price.

Vittia. It is (*low and ashamed*) that you renounce Amaury's love.

[*A pause.*

Yolanda. Amaury's love. . . . You then would rend me there

Where not Eternity could heal the wound
Though all the River of God might be for balm!
Cruelty like to this you could not do?

[*Waits a moment.*

A swallow on the battlements to-day
Fell from the hawk: you soothed and set it free.
This, then, you would not—!

Vittia. Yes.

Yolanda. You cannot!

Vittia. Yes.

Yolanda (*wrung for a moment then calm*).

I had forgotten, you are of Venice—Venice
Whose burdening is vast upon this land.
Good-night.

Vittia. And you despise me!

Yolanda. More I loathe
That love of him has led your thought so low.

[*Is going.*]

Vittia. Stay! If you leave and do not choose
at once—

[*Sounds are heard at the gates.*]

Who's that? . . . (*starts*). Amaury? . . . You've
expected him?

[*The chains fall.*]

Your purpose, then! Is it now to renounce
And force him from you or to have me breathe
To Renier Lusignan the one word
That will transmute his wrong to madness?
Say it! For centuries have stained these walls
But never a wife; never—

Enter BERENGERE.

Yolanda. Mother? . . .

Berengere. Amaury
Has spurred to us, Yolanda, from his post,

And is below. But . . . what has befallen?

[*Looks from one to the other.*]

Yolanda. He comes here, mother?

Berengere. At once.

Yolanda (in dread). Ah!

Berengere. Child? . . .

Vittia (to Yolanda). To-night

Must be the end.

Yolanda. Go, go.

Berengere (as Vittia passes out). What thing
is this?

Yolanda. Mother, I cannot have him—here—
Amaury!

Defer him but a little—till to-morrow.

I cannot see him now.

Berengere. This is o'erstrange.

Yolanda. Help me to think. Go to him, go,
and say

Some woman thing—that I am ill—that I

Am at confession—penance—that—Ah, say

But anything!

Berengere. Yolanda!

Yolanda. Say. . . . No use.

Too late.

Berengere. His step?

Yolanda. Oh, unmistakable;

Along the corridor. Go!

[The curtains are thrown back.

Amaury (at the threshold). My Yolanda!

[Hastens down and takes her, passive, in his arms. BERENGERE goes.

My, my Yolanda! . . .

[Kisses her.

To touch you is as triumph to the blood,

Is as the boon of battle to the strong!

Yolanda. Amaury, no; release me and say why
You come: The Saracens—?

Amaury. Not of them now!

[Bends back her head.

But of some tribute incense to this beauty,

Dear as the wind wafts from undying shrines

Of mystery and myrrh!

I'd have the eloquence of quickened moons

Pouring upon the midnight magically,

To say all I have yearned.

Now, with your head pillowed upon my breast!

Slow sullen speech, come to my soldier lips,

Rough with command, and impotent of softness!

Come to my lips! or fill so full my eyes

That the unutterable shall seem as sweet

To my Yolanda. But . . . how, how now? tears?

[Lifts her face.]

Yolanda. Amaury—

Amaury. What have I done? Too pronely
pressed

You to this coat of steel?

Yolanda. No, no.

Amaury. My words,

Or silence, then?

Yolanda. Amaury, no, but sweet,
Sweet as the roses of Damascus crusht,
Your silence is! and sweeter than the dream

Of April nightingale on Troados,
Or gushing by the springs of Chitria,
Your every word of love! Yet—yet—ah, fold me,
Within your arms oblivion and hold me,
Fast to your being press me, and there bless me
With breathèd power of your manhood's might.
Amaury! . . .

Amaury. This I cannot understand.

Yolanda (freeing herself). Nothing—a folly—
groundless frailty.

Amaury. You've been again at some old tale
of sorrow,

[*Goes to the lectern.*]

Pining along the pages of a book—
This, telling of that Italy madonna
Whose days were sad—I have forgotten how.
Is it not so?

Yolanda. No, no. The tears of women
Come as the air and sighing of the night,
We know not whence or why.

Amaury. Often, perhaps.

I am not skilled to tell. But never these!

They are of trouble known.

Yolanda. Yet now forget them.

Amaury. It will not leave my heart that somehow—how

I cannot fathom—Camarin—

Yolanda (lightly, to stop him). No farther!

Amaury. That Camarin of Paphos is their cause.—

Tell me—

Yolanda. Yes, that I love you!

Amaury. Tell me—

Yolanda. Love you!

As sea the sky! and as the sky the wind!

And as the wind the forest! As the forest—

What does the forest love, Amaury? I

Can think of nothing!

Amaury. Tell me then you have

Never a moment of you yielded to him,

That never he has touched too long this hand—

I've seen that battle-light in you before.
'Tis of the Saracens? you ride to-night
Into their peril?

Amaury. Come, the word, the word!

Berengere. Only this token.

Amaury. The spur? the spur? (*Takes it.*)

They then
Are landing!

Yolanda. How, Amaury; tell your meaning!

Amaury. The galleys of the Saracens have found
Anchor and land to-night near Keryneia.
My troops are ready and await me—
So I must speed.

Yolanda (with strange terror). I pray you, do
not go.

Amaury. Yolanda!

Yolanda. If I am left alone—!

Amaury. Yolanda!

Yolanda (sinking to a seat). I meant it not—a
breath of fear—forget—

And go.

Amaury. I know you not to-night. Farewell.

[He kisses her and hurries off. . . . A silence.]

Berengere. Yolanda——

Yolanda. Mother, I will go to sleep.

[She rises.]

Berengere. A change has come to you—a difference

Drawn as a veil between us.

Yolanda. I am weary.

Berengere. You love me?

Yolanda. As, O mother, I love him,
With love impregnable to every ill,
As Paradise is.

Berengere. Then—

Yolanda. I pray, no more.

To-night I am flooded with a deeper tide
Than yet has flowed into my life—and through it
Sounds premonition: so I must have calm.

*[She embraces BERENGERE; goes slowly up
steps and off.]*

Berengere (chilled). What fear—if it is fear—
has so unfixed her?

Is it suspicion? Then I must not meet
Him here to-night—or if to-night, no more.
Her premonition!—and my dream that I
Should with a cross bring her deep bitterness.

*[Thinks a moment, then takes the crucifix from
her neck.*

Had Renier but come, perhaps I might . . .

[Lays it on table.

O were I dead this sinning would awake me! . . .
And yet I care not (*dully*). . . . No, I will forget.

*[Goes firmly from door to door and looks
out each. Then lifts, unnoting, the
cross-shaped candlestick; and waving it
at the loggia, turns holding it before her.*

Soon he will come up from the cool, and touch
Away my weakness with mad tenderness.
Soon he will . . . Ah!

*[Has seen with terror the candlestick's struc-
ture.*

The cross! . . . My dream! . . . Yolanda!

[Lets it fall.

Mercy of God, move in me! . . . Sacrilege!

[Sinks feebly to the divan, and bows, overcome.

Camarin (appearing after a pause on the loggia).

My Berengere, a moment, and I come!

[Enters, locking the grating behind him.

*Then he hurries down and leans to
lift her face.*

Berengere. No, no! nor ever, ever again, for
ever!

[Shrinks.

Go from me and behind leave no farewell. . . .

Camarin. This is—illusion. In the dew I've
waited,

And the night's song of you is in my brain—

A song that seems—

Berengere. Withhold from words. At last
Fate is begun! See, with the cross it was

I waved you hither. Leave me—let me pass
Out of this sin—and to repentance—after.

Camarin. I cannot, cannot!

Berengere. Pity, then, my fear.
This moment were it known would end with murder,
Or did it not, dishonour still would kill!
Leave, leave.

Camarin. To-morrow, then; but not to-night!

[He goes behind and puts his arms around her.]
Give me thy being once again, thy beauty.
For it I'm mad as bacchanals for wine.

*[YOLANDA, entering on the balcony, hears,
and would retreat, but sees RENIER
come to the grating.]*

Once more be to me all that woman may!
Let us again take rapture wings and rise
Up to our world of love, guilt would unsphere.
Let us live over days that passed as streams
Limpid by lotus-banks unto the sea,
O'er all the whispered nights that we have clasped

Knowing the heights and all the deeps of passion!
But speak, and we shall be amid the stars.

[RENIER *draws a dagger and leaves the grating. With a low cry YOLANDA staggers down: the Two rise, fearful.*

Berengere. Yolanda!

Yolanda. Mother, mother! . . . Ah, his eyes!

Berengere. What brings you here—to spy upon me?

Yolanda. Listen! . . .

Think not of me—no, hush—but of the peril
Arisen up . . . Your husband!

Camarin. Renier?

Yolanda. Was at that grating—heard. And
from its sheath

Drew forth a dagger!—Ah!

Berengere (weakly). What does she say?

Yolanda. Find calmness now, and some expedient.

[*She struggles to think.*

Berengere. I cannot die.

Yolanda. No, no.

Berengere. My flesh is weak,
Is poor of courage—poverished by guilt,
As all my soul is! But, Yolanda, you—!

Yolanda. Yes, something must be done—something be done.

[CAMARIN goes to the curtains and returns.

Berengere. The shame . . . the shame . . . the shame!

Yolanda. There yet is time.

Berengere. You can deliver! you are innocent.

Yolanda. Perhaps. Let me but think.—He came—

Berengere. You see?

There is escape? a way from it?

Yolanda. Perhaps.

He came after your words . . . yes . . . could not see

Here in the dimness . . . but has only *heard*

Sir Camarin . . .

Berengere. I do not know!

Yolanda.

Go, in . . .

Up to your chamber and be as asleep.

There is a way—I think—dim, but a way.

Go to your chamber; for there yet may be

Prevention!

Berengere. I—yes, yes.

Yolanda.

There is a way.

[BERENGERE goes.]

Strength now to walk it! strength unfaltering.

Camarin. What do you purpose?

Yolanda.

Here to take her place,

Here at the lowest of her destiny.

Camarin. I do not understand.

Yolanda.

But wholly shall.

Clasp me within your arms; he must believe

'Tis I and not his wife you have unhallowed,

Your arms about me, though they burn! and breathe

me

Thirst of unbounded love as unto her.

[*He clasps her, and they wait.*]

Ah, it is he!

Camarin. No.

Yolanda. Yes, the words; at once!

Camarin (hoarsely). With all my body and soul-
breath I love you,

[RENIER enters with MORO.

And all this night is ours for ecstasy.

Kiss me with quenchless kisses, and embrace

Me with your beauty, till—

[YOLANDA with a cry, as of fear, looses
herself, pretending to discover RENIER,
who is struck rigid.

Moro. My lord, my lord! . . .

It is Yolanda.

Renier. Then—

[The dagger falls from him.

Why, then—Amaury!

[YOLANDA, realising, stunned, sinks back to the
divan.

CURTAIN

ACT II

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SEVERAL DAYS HAVE ELAPSED

SCENE: *The forecourt of the castle, beyond which is the garden and in the distance the mountains, under the deep tropical blue of morning. On the right the wall enclosing the castle grounds runs back and is lost in the foliage of cypress, palm, orange; it is pierced by an arched gate with lifted portcullis. On the left rises the dark front of the castle, its arabesqued doorway open. Across the rear a low arcaded screen of masonry, with an entrance to the right, separates the court from the garden. Before it a fountain, guarded by a statue of a Knight of St. John, falls into a porphyry basin. By the castle door, to the front, and elsewhere, are stone seats. HASSAN is standing moodily by the screen, left, looking out the portcullis. He starts, hearing steps, and as the old leach TREMITUS enters, motions him silently into the*

castle; then muttering "the old blood-letter," stands as before, while CIVA, MAGA, and MAURIA are heard in the garden, and enter gaily bearing water-jars to the fountain. CIVA sees his look and breaks into a twitting laughter. The other two join her.

Civa. Look at him! Maga! Mauria! behold!
Was ever sight so sweet upon the world?
Is he not very Joy?

Mauria (critically). Now, is he not?
With the price of vinegar upon his face.

[*All laugh.*

The price of vinegar! who'll buy!—Not I!
Not I! Not I! Not I!

Hassan.

Wench.

Civa.

Verily!

And not a man! he has discovered it!
You're not a man, Mauria! we were duped.

[*MAURIA slaps her playfully.*

But see him now—a mummy of the Nile!
Who died of choler!

Mauria. Then, a care, he'll bite.
He's been in the grave a long while and he's hungry.
A barley-loaf, quick, Maga!

Civa. To appease him!
But s-sh! beware! there's something of import.

[*They stop in mock awe before him.*]

What does he think of?

Mauria. Sphinxes and the spheres.

Civa. Or little ants and gnats that buzz about
him.

Mauria. And how to make them smart for sauciness.

Civa. Or of Alessa!

Maga. No, no, Civa! come;
Enough of teasing.

Civa. Of Alessa!

Maga. No.
Your pitcher, come. He's troubled by the tale
Of lady Yolanda—
And waits for lord Amaury from the battle.

Civa. The—! heigh! heigh-o! awaits! la, la! he does?

[*HASSAN starts at her tone.*

For lord Amaury? does he so indeed?

Hassan. What do you know? Be silent.

Civa. Ho!

Hassan. Itch! would

You have lady Yolanda hear? She comes

Now, as she has this morning thrice, to ask.

[*YOLANDA appears on the threshold with*

ALESSA.

Lord Renier . . . remember, if she learns!

[*CIVA flouts him, but goes to the fountain.*

The others follow, fill their jars, and, singing, return to the garden. YOLANDA then crosses to HASSAN, who waits evasive.

Yolanda. My want is still the same—words are unneeded.

Hassan. To know of lord Amaury?

Yolanda. Lord Amaury—
He has not yet returned?

Hassan (loathly). I have not seen him.

Yolanda. Nor heard?

Hassan. Nothing.

Yolanda. I cannot understand.

[*Goes to the gate, troubled.*

Hassan (low). Liar that I am to say it!

Yolanda. I cannot—cannot!

[*Returns.*

The Saracens we know were routed to
Their vessels—all the Allah-crying horde.
And lord Amaury—said the courier not?—
Rode in the battle as a seraph might
To the Holy Sepulchre's deliverance.
And yet no word from him.

Hassan. Perhaps—with reason.

[*She looks at him quickly—he flushes.*

With reason! . . . knowing, lady, what, here, now,

Is rumoured of a baron
And lady Yolanda! . . . Pardon!

Yolanda (slowly). Of a baron
And lady Yolanda.

Hassan. Yes: it is the women
Who with their ears ever at secrecy
Rumour it. But, lady, it is a lie?
This Camarin, this prinker,
Whose purse is daily loose to us. . . . I curse him!
His father . . . Well, my mother's ten years dead,
Stained, as you know—
And flower-lips breathe innocent above her.
But I'll avenge her doom.

Yolanda. On—whom?

Hassan (points castlewards). On him!
So you, who do not hush this tale of you,
Though it is truthless—hear:
I have a stab for Camarin of Paphos
Whenever he has lived—but say!—too long.

Yolanda (who has listened rigidly. After a pause).

Come here . . . look in my eyes, and—deeper . . .

Shame!

[*Quells him.*]

Pity alone we owe to sin not blame.

And they who love may stray, it seems, beyond

All justice of our judging.—

Is evil mad enchantment come upon

The portals of this castle?

Hassan.

I would serve you.

Yolanda. With murder? no. But if you would

indeed,

As oft you have—

Hassan.

Lady, I will.

Yolanda.

Then watch

The Venetian, and when Amaury comes

Find me at once. What sound was that? . . . A

bugle?

It is! it is! Alessa! (*Overjoyed.*) Do you hear?

His troop! Amaury's! O the silver chime!

Again I breathe, I breathe!

My heart as a bird of May!

Amaury! . . . Come! we'll go to him! we'll go!
Before any within Lusignan—!

Alessa. Lady!

Yolanda. At once! it rings again! again! we'll
go!

Alessa. And tell him?

Yolanda. Warn! Warn him a fever's here
That he must fend his ear from. 'Twill suffice.
And I again shall see him, hear him speak,
Hang on his battle-story blessedly!
And you, Hassan. . . . But why do you stand
stone?

You know something. . . . He's dead!

Hassan. No, lady, no.

Yolanda. Not? ah! . . . then what? 'Twas not
his trumpet?

Hassan (after a struggle). No.

And I will lie to you no longer;
Though for obedience it be or life;
And at lord Renier's command. . . . It is

Not true that lord Amaury from the battle
Has not returned.

Yolanda. But he—you mean—is here?

[*Stands motionless.*]

Hassan. He came . . . on yesterday . . . at
dusk. Was led
Up to his chamber . . .
So much lord Renier who slipt him in
Revealed, that I might guile you.

Alessa (sharply). And you have?

Hassan. Yes.

Alessa. Though you boasted love to me?

Hassan. Now, woman!

Alessa. Lady, I would have wed him—wed this
toad!

[*Stingingly.*]

Who'd kill the Paphian, too!

Hassan. Yes!

Alessa. Worm! with dust?

Heeling away from him?

Yolanda. Be still, be still.

[*ALESSA turns to her.*

These words can wait on what may yet be helped.
This may undo me! First of all I should
Have seen Amaury! Now——!

Hassan. The Venetian!

[*They start. VITTIA enters from the castle.*

Lady, I will go in.

Alessa. And I; to wait.

[*They go.*

Yolanda (suddenly). But I to see Amaury.

Vittia. What? (*stops*).

Yolanda. To see,

Vittia Visani, who withholds Amaury—

Who came last night at dusk, as well you know.

[*They face, opposed.*

What have you told him?

Vittia. Ha!

Yolanda. Insolence, false

And feigning! But no matter; lies are brief.

I'll go myself to him.

Vittia. To be repelled?

BERENGERE *enters.*

Yolanda. If he could trust you—but he could not.

Vittia. Knowing
A Paphian ere this has fondled two?

Yolanda. You hear, mother? (*To Vittia*).
Out of my way at once.

Berengere. Stay, stay! She has not told him!
nothing! . . . Yes,

I too have been aware and kept you blind.
For he was overworn, and still is, much.
But now his wound——

Yolanda. Wound! he is wounded?

Berengere. He sleeps.

Yolanda. And is in danger—jeopardy?

Berengere. In none;

If the leech Tremitus has any skill;
And that you know.

Yolanda. I thank . . . Madonna . . . thee!

[*VITTIA laughs and goes.*]

But you, mother, are come at last to say
 Your promises, broken two days, are kept?
 You've spoken? won lord Renier to wisdom?
 Pled him to silence which alone can save us?
 Dear mother——?

Berengere. Do not call me so again.

[*Turns away.*]

I have not—and I will not.

Yolanda. Oh!

Berengere. I cannot. . . .

Yolanda. But can leave me so laden here within
 This gulf's dishonour? Never! . . . So return
 And pledge him but to wait!
 For this Venetian has now, I bode,
 Something of evil more,
 When once Amaury hears all that has passed.
 Return!

Berengere. I cannot.

Yolanda (stung). Then hear, hear me! I
 Too am a woman, and the woman wants,
 The beauty and ache and dream and glow and urge

Of an unreckoned love are mine as yours.
 I will not lose Amaury; but will tell him
 Myself the truth.

Berengere. Then—I'll not stay for death,
 And wait for shame. But now with Camarin
 Will go from here.

Yolanda. Mother!

Berengere. To some retreat
 Away!

Yolanda. Where still pursuit would follow!
 even,

I fear, Amaury's?—

And overtake you though it were as far
 As the sea foams, or past the sandy void
 Of stricken Africa? It would be vain.
 Vain, and I cannot have you. No, but listen—

*[Breaks off seeing RENIER, on the castle
 threshold. His look is on her, but he
 comes down addressing BERENGERE.]*

Renier. She troubles you too much.

Berengere. My lord?

Renier. Too much.

You cherish her and reap unchastity
 For gratitude—unchastity against
 Our very son who was betrothed to her.
 Yet see her shameless.

Berengere (dully). No; I think you wrong her.

[*YOLANDA moves apart.*

Renier. Nobly you pity! But it will not veil her.
 Rather the convent and the crucifix,
 Matin and Vesper in a round remote,
 And senseless beads, for such.—But what more now
 Is she demanding?

Berengere. Little.

Renier. Not the means
 Still to deceive Amaury?

Berengere. Renier . . . no.

[*Speaks loathly.*

But I have a request that, if you grant,
 Will lead peace back to us . . . and from us draw
 This fang of fate.

Renier. Ah.

Berengere. Yes.

Renier (slowly). And we might be
As those that wedded love?

Berengere. Perhaps.

Renier. That—love!

[*A pause.*]

Then it shall be, at once . . . But no, I first
Have a confession.

Berengere. You?

Renier. A pang!—For days,

[*Takes her hand.*]

Before I found Yolanda on the breast
Of Camarin of Paphos—
I suffered in the furnace of suspicion
The fume and suffocation of the thought
That you were the guilty one—you my own wife.

[*She recoils to YOLANDA, who comes up.*]

I did; but rue, rue it! . . .

. . . Yet—it is just

That you recoil even as now you do

From stain upon your wedded constancy. . . .

And time that is e'er-pitiful must pass

Over it—

Before there is forgiveness. And perhaps

Then I shall win you as I never have.—

Now the request.

Berengere. That now . . . I cannot plead.

[*Sees YOLANDA harden. Is impelled.*

And yet I must . . . It is that, till I bid,

Amaury may not know of this . . . not know

This trouble fallen from a night of evil—

Pitiless on us as a meteor's ash.

Renier. Not of it? he? not know?

Berengere. Trust to me.

Renier. How!

And to this wanton's perfidy to bind

Him witless to her—with a charm perhaps—

Or, past releasing, with a philtre? She

Whom now he holds pure as a spirit sped

From immortality, or the fair fields

Of the sun, to be his bride?

Yolanda. Sir, no! . . . She means

Not I shall wed him! (*Winningly.*) Only that
you spare

To separate us with this horror; that
You trust me to dispel his love, to pall
And chill his passion from me. For I crave
Only one thing—innocence in his sight.
Believe!—believe!

Renier. I will—that you are mad.
Yet madder I, if to this murk my brain
Were blind.

Yolanda. As it will be! in deadlier dark,
If you attend me not!
And may have destiny you cannot know.
But you will heed?
For somewhere in you there is tenderness.
Once when you chafed in fever and I bore
White orange blossoms dewy to your pillow
You touched my hand gently, as might a father.

[*Caresses his.*

Once on the tower when alone at dusk
I sang—I know not why—of lost delights,

Of vanished roses that are e'er recalling
 May to the world, you came and suddenly
 Lifted my brow up silent to your kiss.
 Ah, you remember; you will hear me?

Renier. No!

'Though you are cunning.—Thus you wove the mesh
 About Amaury—till he could not move
 Beyond you.

Yolanda. For his sake I ask it.

Renier. For
 No sake but to o'ersway him with your eyes
 In secret, thus, and with
 Your hair that he believes an aureole
 Brought with you out of Heaven.

Berengere. Again—wrong.

Renier. So deem you and, my Berengere, I
 grieve,
 Desiring much your peace.

Berengere. It grieves you not.

Renier. Then not! and half I fear—you hear?
 —it should not.

There's midnight in this thing and mystery.
Does she not love—Camarin?

Yolanda (trembling). Say no more.
Be all—all as you will.

Renier. That brings you low:
But brings to me no light—only again
The stumbling in suspicion.

Yolanda. It should not.

Renier (with a sudden gleam).
To-morrow then, unless Amaury runs
Fitting revenge through Camarin of Paphos,
Your lover, you shall clasp him openly
Before all of Lusignan.

Yolanda. No; no, no!
The thought of it is soil! . . . Rather . . . his
death!

Renier. What, what?

Berengere. My lord, she knows not what she
says.

The unaccustomed wind of these ill hours
Has torn tranquillity from her and reason.

Yolanda (*realising*). Yes, as she says—tranquillity and reason.

[*Strains to smile.*

These hours of ill!

Renier. I'll send her Camarin.

[*Goes, looking steadfastly back.*

Yolanda (*turning, then, to BERENGERE*).

His mood and mien—that tremor in his throat,
Unfaltering. I fear him.

Berengere. Life is fear.

No step was ever taken in the world
But from a brink of danger, or in flight
From happiness whose air is ever sin.
It sickens me.

Yolanda. Mother!

Berengere. Nothing; a pain
Here in my breast.

[*Sits.*

Yolanda. And it is all through him
Who as a guest came pledged into this house.

Came with the chivalry and manly show
Of reverence and grace, that he too well
Has learnt in cunning lands and used to lure.

[CAMARIN *appears from garden.*

Ah, and he seeks us now! unwhelmed of it!
Ready of step, impassive, cold! And see—

[CAMARIN *bows forcedly.*

A flawless courtesy! as of a king!
Can he not smile too on his handiwork?
Our days were merciful and he has made
Each moment's beat a blow upon the breast.
Honour was here and innocence lies now
A sacrifice that pain cannot consume.—

Camarin. Or death.

Yolanda. Then have you not, unshameable!
A help for it or healing? you who know
So well the world and its unwonted ways!
A man would have, a man.

Camarin.

And I am barren.

Camarin. Suspicion and the peril-feet of shame
I must keep from her still.

Yolanda. Though driven o'er
My heart they trample the lone flower of hope.

[*Shaking off his hand, then, unnaturally
wrought up.*

And even now perhaps Amaury hears
And turns away in horror!

Camarin. What? Come, come.
Enough is here without—

Yolanda (as before). I'll go to him!
Despite of them! in to his side and say
That I am innocent—as the first dawn
And dew of Eden! . . . Yes!

Camarin. A frenzy! Mere
Folly! you wander!

Yolanda (suddenly). That was anguish? whose?

[*Is hauntedly listening.*

Camarin. Amaury still is many leagues away—

[*HASSAN appears.*

At Keryneia! Do you hear me?

Yolanda.

Hassan!

[*Is numb as he hurries down from the castle to her. A pause; then her voice falls hoarsely.*

I hear you, speak. His wounds I know. The rest!
They've told him?

Hassan. The Venetian, who nursed him
Last night, pouring his potions—
She and lord Renier. They broke his sleep.
He listened to them as one in a grave.
Then they besought of him
Some oath against you, were they right: he would
not.

Now he has risen,
Silent and pale and suffering; in leash.
He's coming here.

Camarin. Why, you are mad!

Yolanda.

Be still.

Camarin. Amaury was not then delayed? is—
here?

*[Voices are heard perturbed within the
castle. Then AMAURY, putting aside
RENIER and TREMITUS, followed by
VITTIA and others, enters down.]*

Amaury. I'll not return unto my couch though
twice

These wounds and all your wants were urging it!
Yolanda! my Yolanda!—Never, never!

[Takes her to him.]

Until I prove you that a word against
Her that I hold here in my arms is more
To me than any peril.

Tremitus. But, sir—! . . . Aeih!
My precious physic wasted!

Amaury. Till I prove it!
For . . . my Yolanda! . . .
You who are purity if Mary still
Is mother of God and lighteth Paradise!
You in whose presence I am purged as one

Bathing a thousand years in angel song!
 They say, you, who are stainless to my eyes
 As is the sacring-bell to holy ears,
 So undefiled even the perfect lily
 Pendent upon your breast fears to pollute it!
 Listen, they tell me you—A fool, a fool
 Would know it unbelievable and laugh.

Renier. As now a fool is doing?

Amaury. O, sir, pardon.

You are my father, and, I must believe,
 Mean well this monster breath's unchastity,
 As does this lady (*of VITTIA*) who has gently
 nursed me.

But you were tricked; it was illusion swum
 Before your sleep. Therefore my purpose is
 Now to forget it.

Tremitus. Aieh! and to return
 Now to my drugs.

Renier. Stand off!—As dogs forget
 The lash in hunger of the wonted bone?

[*Laughs angrily.*]

Amaury. A poison so incredible and dark
 You cannot duped inoculate me with.
 Trust in my veins makes of it but more love.
 And to dispel your minds (*goes to CAMARIN*) I'll
 clasp his hand
 Whom you have so accused.

Vittia. O do, my lord!

[*Smiles disdainfully.*]

And then embrace him in whose arms three nights
 Ago she was embraced.

Yolanda (to her). Can you so say!

Vittia. Yes, and will add——

Amaury. Lady of Venice, nothing!

But this to all, I answer!—

There is my mother, see,

Wounded with wonder of this plight, and pity.

Yolanda has dwelt by her

As the fawn

By the white doe on mount Chionodes.

I would as quick believe that she had given

Her holiness up to contamination

As that Yolanda——

Yolanda. Amaury, enough! . . . I know!

Amaury. As quickly!

Yolanda. Then . . . quell this delirium!

[*A pause.*

Out of your thought forever let it fall,

Hear no more of it, ever!

Be deaf to it as to a taunt of doom,

In triple mail to every peaceless word,

Granite against even its memory.

Say that you will, and now! . . .

Renier. So that you may

Allure him yet to wed you?

Amaury. Sir!

Renier. She would.

Yolanda. No, no! But let him. . . . Then I

will go far

Away from here to any alien air,

To opiate India, a lost sea-isle!

To the last peak of arid Caucasus.

Renier. With Camarin of Paphos?

Yolanda. With whoever
Your peace and this compelling pain. . . . Ah
no!

Renier. With him, with him, I say? . . .

Amaury. You drive and drain her.
To me her words shall be—me and no other.
So my Yolanda now dissolve the cling
Of this invisible but heavy hydra;
I've striven with it till no more I can.
If any tare has been unseemly sown
Upon the April vision of our love,
Say it at once that I may rend and fling it
Away from us. Say it!

Renier. Vainly implored.—
Yet ask her this, If she three nights ago—

Amaury. I will not so insult her.

Tremitus. Aieh—

Renier. Insult?

She knows what I would bid and does she hurl
Her soul in any disavowal?

Amaury. I
Will speak to her alone. Go, all of you,
There to the fountain.

Yolanda. Yes, Amaury, then
One searching of my face shall free your fear.
Alone, alone.

Renier. Still to befool him!

Yolanda (warningly). Choose!
I cannot suffer more of this.

Amaury. Nor I
To breathe ever the burning of this mist
Of anguish and insatiate accusal.—
This wound upon my throat, fever it not
With longer fire of doubt, Yolanda.

Yolanda. Ah!

Berengere. I am not well. I will go to my
chamber.

[She passes into the castle.]

Renier. But I never until this guiler grants
I found her in the arms of Camarin,
Drinking the frenzied wine of passion

He poured from his soul.

Amaury. Yolanda?

Renier. She is silent;
Dumb to deny it.

Amaury. But she will, she will.
You've driven her with dread and awe.

Vittia (lightly). And truth?

Amaury. Have wounded her. But do not fear,
Yolanda;
Fiercely disown.

Yolanda. Amaury . . . it is true.

[*He staggers slowly back.*]

No, no; I have not been faithless to you—
Even a moment
To the divinity of love high-altared
Here in my breast! to the immutable
Beauty of it! . . . look, look not on me so—
As if I had struck, murdered a little child!
Or palsied one who put a hand to help me;

Or through eternity had desecrated,
 Vainly, virginity and trust and truth!
 No, my Amaury! I . . . do you not see?

[*Hysterically.*

Not faithless, hear! it is not true! not true!
 But only this——

Camarin. Yolanda!

Yolanda. I——

Camarin. Yolanda!

[*A moment, then she sinks down, her face
 in her hands. AMAURY groans; then
 starting goes fiercely to HASSAN, and
 taking his sword recrosses trembling
 to CAMARIN.*

Amaury. The day you first set step in Lusignan

An image of the Magdalen within
 The chapel yonder fell—presaging this.
 Only your death, your death or mine stands pale

Between us now, awaiting silently.

Draw, and at once.

Camarin. Amaury, I will not.

Amaury. Out, quickly.

Camarin. Do your will. I'll put no more
To the guilt I bear, or to the misery
That guilt has brought upon you.

Amaury. Coward!

Camarin. Strike!

Amaury. You play a part! (*Raves.*) And 'tis
that you may live
Still in the love that you a thief have stolen.
So, with your steel——!

Camarin. It stays within its sheath.

Amaury. Then I will not be thwarted though I
must

Crush you as one a viper with his heel,
Though I must take your leper throat into
My hands and strangle life from it!
For the same sky you breathe I will not.
The sun that falls upon you shall not foul

My being—

Though I must go down into hell for it.

[He starts, frenzied, to strike, but suddenly staggers; then clasps at his throat, drops the sword, and sinks down moaning.]

Yolanda. His wound!

Tremitus. Aeih, aeih! at last.

Yolanda. Amaury! Oh!

[Runs to him. He struggles to his feet.]

Amaury! Amaury!

Amaury. Stand away from me.

[She falls back; he laughs in derision.]

I to believe her pure as my own mother!

Vittia. Had you but trusted me, Amaury.

Amaury. You?

[Looks long at her.]

Henceforth I will.

Vittia. And wholly?

Amaury (significantly). She . . . shall do it.

[Starts into the castle.]

Yolanda (*dauntedly*). Amaury! what is this?

Vittia. That, ere a dawn,

Guileless Yolanda, you shall wed with him

Your paramour of Paphos——

Yolanda. Camarin?

Vittia. And from these gates be led wanton
away.

[*YOLANDA, for a moment whelmed, tries to laugh scorn; but, turning, her eye meets RENIER'S full of suspicion. He follows AMAURY meaningly into the castle.*

CURTAIN

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ACT III

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THE SAME DAY

SCENE: *The Hall and loggia of Act I; but toward sunset, and afar, on the flushed sea, are seen the fisher-boats returning pale-winged to shore. In the left distance, also, a portion of Famagouste is visible above the waves—its orient walls and towers, white domes and houses, interspersed with tall palms. The interior of the Hall is the same; only the divan is placed to the front and left, the lectern near the balcony leading to the sleeping apartments and to the chapel. SMARDA is lying lithely on the divan, beguiled with her charms and amulets, and from time to time giving a low, sinuous laugh. VITTIA enters, watches a moment, thoughtful, then advances.*

Vittia. Smarda——

Smarda (springing up). Lady . . . your slave!

Vittia. I think you are.
Think that you are—if ever the leopard yields.

Smarda. To you, lady? A-ha! let him refuse.
Command!

Vittia. And you will heed it well; I fear not.
But first I have thought of requital.

Smarda (avidly). OUIE!

Vittia. Those amulets you wear, of jade and
sard—

Smarda (quickly dark). Are for revenge—to
bring revenge!

Vittia. And from
Your Scythian home, over the hated sea,
They came with you.

Smarda. Yes.

Vittia. From the home whence you
Were torn by the Moor who was your one-time
master.

Is it not so?

Smarda. The spirits strangle him!

[Works at the charms.]

Vittia. Well, if I win to-night what is begun
You shall not want, to-morrow,
Gold for a weightier witchery upon him.

[*The slave's eyes gleam.*

But listen, every sinew will be needed
Still to achieve this wedding, though we have
Camarin with us, willing. So I've learned
A ship has come from Venice.

Smarda (*quickly*). Pietro?

Vittia. Yes, Pietro, it must be, has arrived
With papers that will help.

Smarda. Ha! Fortune's touch!

Vittia. It is, but tardy. Therefore I must have
Them instantly.

Smarda. Ere he has time, lady,
To vaunt his loves, in Lusignan, and babble.

Vittia. As, wooing dolt, he will. But see to it.
I shall be in this place with lord Amaury,
Whom I must . . . but no matter.
He left me suddenly a season since
Seeing his father look strangely upon

His mother; for lord Renier's doubt I still
 Have been compelled to feed—to move Yolanda.
 Here in this place then I shall be, at need.

[She goes engrossedly.

Smarδα (recalling the pledge; evilly). A-ha!
 ha-ha! ha-ha! if she but win!

A talisman with might upon the Moor!

[Begins to dance—a charm held up before her.

If she but win! a-ha! a curse on him!

*[Whirls faster with a wild grace, swaying
 to and fro, and chanting softly the
 while, till suddenly a laugh in the cor-
 ridor stops her, and PIETRO is heard
 through the curtains adoring CIVA,
 who pushes him into the Hall, then
 runs away laughing.*

Pietro (after her). Hold, fair one! Stay! You
 look on Pietro

Of Venice! Pietro!

Smarδα (to herself). A-ha . . . ha-ha!

Pietro (*turning*). It is the slave! (*Grandly*.)

I greet you, slave.

Smarda. Greeting!

Pietro. I, Pietro, who, as you know, am sought
By all the loveliest
Attending on the lords and high of Venice.

Smarda. So! . . . So!

Pietro. "The gentle Pietro," they say.
You may remember.

Smarda. So.

Pietro. "Proud Pietro!"

And then they sigh.

Smarda. So.

Pietro. Then they weep and pine—
"For Pietro"—until I must console them.

Smarda (*going to where he poses; contemptuously*). And for all this, O prince of paramours,

[*Spurns him.*

My lady no doubt has bid you to sail from Venice?

Pietro. Eh?

Smarda. Eh! And she will hear no doubt with
love

That you delay the powers of the Senate
Sent in your keeping to her?

Pietro. Slave! . . . (*alarmed*) the papers?

Smarda. With love and with delight? since she
awaits them?

With joy? When told your amorous mouthings
yonder?

Pietro. Slave, she must never! You will take
them to her!

[*Fumbles for papers.*

In to her . . . quickly! . . .

Dear slave, you will—and say if she inquire

That I was led astray

By the little Cyprian with guiling eyes

Who fell enamoured of me at the gate.

Smarda. Civa!

Pietro. The same! I sought to run away,

[*Still searching.*

O slave, say to her, but I could not for—

For—for a lady by the marble knight,
That is, by the fountain, swooned, as I came in.
And then—

Smarda. Swooned!

Pietro. As I came!

Smarda (a-quiver). Beside the fount?

Who? which? lady Yolanda? lady Berengere?

[He stares at her ardour.

Did no one say? . . . My mistress must know this!

The papers, quickly!

Pietro. Slave, you——! By my sins!

[She has seized them swiftly, and gone.

He follows amazed. Then sunset begins without, crimson and far; and AMAURY appears from the loggia, reckless and worn. He pauses, looks about him, troubled.

Amaury. Not here yet. . . . There is more in this than seems.

[Goes to divan and sits. VITTIA enters behind.

More, Camarin of Paphos, than is clear!

[*Starts up.*

And she must tell me! (*Sees Vittia.*) Lady, you
I mean.

[*VITTIA advances inquiringly.*

What is beyond this shame upon Yolanda?

Vittia. My lord——?

Amaury. What! It is moving in me clouded,
Deeper than sight but pressing at my peace.

My father's look! you saw it!

Vittia.

Ah!

Amaury.

And saw

Fear in my mother!

Vittia.

Yes, implanted deep.

Amaury. And did not wonder?

Vittia (sits).

When I knew its source?

No need, my lord—though your pang too I marked—

For, trust me, ere to-morrow all will cease—

If you are firm.

Amaury.

I? who know nought? In what?

Vittia. That do not ask, I pray. (*Deftly.*) Another could

Fitly reply, but I——

Amaury. No other better!

Vittia. Then . . . it will cease, my lord—
So as a flail of doubt it should not still
Beat in you—when Yolanda
Is wed with Camarin . . . no, do not speak;
The reason for your sake I must withhold.

Amaury. Though as under sirocco I am kept.
[*Sits.*

Sirocco! . . . It is unintelligible!

[*Rises. A pause.*

Yet you speak gently.

Vittia. No; unblushingly!

[*He looks surprised.*

Unblushingly to one who knows—though by
A chance—my love to him—my lowered love.

[*Turns away.*

And yet I cannot rue

That he awaking sudden from the potion

Surprised yearning and truth upon my lips.
 No, and I would that gentle words might be
 As waters of enchantment on his grief.—
 But of Yolanda—

[*Rises.*

Amaury. Still I love her, still!

Vittia (strainedly). As well she knows, so may
 refuse to wed

With Camarin.

Amaury. She?

Vittia. Since you are Lusignan,
 Heir of a sceptred line,
 And yet may reach—the realm.

Amaury (pierced). Which . . . do you mean,
 She hopes of?

Vittia. Were it folly to make sure?

[*A pause.*

Amaury. How? speak.

Vittia. Again unshameful? No; one thing
 Alone would serve you. That I must not bring
 My tongue to falter.

Amaury. Be it so.

Vittia. And yet . . .

[*He has turned away.*]

Yet I must bend to! and, my lord, I will!

Will . . . for you suffer!

Will, though indelicacy seem to soil

Whatever bloom I boasted.

[*Goes to him.*]

It is this:

To let her . . . but for to-day . . .

Think you . . . for she's aware of my affection . . .

Have chosen—to wed me.

Amaury. You!

Vittia. For to-day.

To-morrow I return to Venice, then

Denial.

Amaury (moved). Lady—?

Vittia. I will bear it.

Amaury. . . . Thus?

[*Struggles.*]

Then it shall be. And grateful I'll await
The issue's utterance. And stay, wear this—

[Takes off a ring.]

From her dead father's hand—
As a proof to her of any tie soever.
But now—for the sails make home along the sea—
Now of my mother.

Vittia. More, my lord?

[Smarda glides in.]

Amaury. This only.

To-morrow when again she . . . Scythian!

[The slave is gleaming strangely.]

Vittia. Smarda! what do you mean? why are
you here?

[Sees papers; takes them.]

These—but not these alone have brought you!

What?

[Follows SMARDA'S eye.]

Of lord Amaury?

Smarda. Of his mother.

Vittia. How!

Smarda. She swooned of terror at the castle gate.

She lies in danger. Hear—'twas as she fled
The lord of Lusignan.

Amaury. My father?

Smarda. He.

And you are sought below, I heard it said:
Some officer of Famagouste—and men.

[*AMAURY turns dazed and goes.*

Vittia (through a surge of thoughts that have darkened her face).

This is again fortune! . . . fortune!

Smarda. Lady?

Vittia. Is! though an instant since it seemed disaster.

Smarda. And how?

Vittia. Yolanda, does not know? nothing?

Smarda. Nothing. She was returning from the rocks,

Where nest the windy gulls,

[*Gloatingly.*

As I came hither. I stole there at noon
To see her suffer.

Vittia. Then—I can compel her.
She will come here. Go to the curtains, see.
If she is near, the Paphian is in
The bower by the cypress: there, tell him,
The loggia—at once . . . Ah!

YOLANDA enters.

Yolanda (to herself). “Ah” indeed.

[Her look of purpose changes to one of distrust. But she firmly fronts to VITTIA, as the slave slips out.]

Vittia. My gratitude! I wished, and you are
here.

Yolanda. And—for some reason of less honour
—you.

Vittia. I, a dear guest? fa!

Yolanda. Would you were! . . . not one
This ne'er-before-venomed air would banish.

[Slowly.]

One whose abiding

These walls would loathe aloud — had they a
tongue

To utter.

Vittia. Yet I may be mistress of them,
Ere all is done—since still it is my purpose.

Yolanda. Gulfs wide as the hate of God for in-
famy

Would lie preventing; so there is no fear.

[*Sits.*

Vittia. A prophesy!

Yolanda. A deeper than disdain.

Vittia. Or than your love of Camarin of
Paphos!

Yolanda. Which you would feign, but cannot.

Vittia. Still, before
Evening is done, you will become his wife.

Yolanda. If, ere it come, all under Lusignan
Do not look scorn on Vittia Pisani.

[*Rises.*

Vittia. What! how?

Yolanda. Plentiful scorn! (*With joy.*) A
 thing may still
 Be done to lift my hope out of this ruin!
 To bring Amaury grateful to my feet!
 And I will do it.

Vittia. Tell? . . . vowing him first
 To win his father's lenience? . . . No . . . I see!
 You will when she who's guilty
 And this enamoured Paphian are fled!

[*YOLANDA turns pale.*

When they are fled! ha . . . And it is too late.

Yolanda. Too—? (*stunned*). You by a trick—
 some trick have—!

Vittia. Hindered? Little
 I needed . . . Her wings are flightless. She is ill,
 Verging—go learn!—to death.

Yolanda. Oh . . . !

Vittia. To the grave.
 And you alone, she knows, can put it far—
 Since she is numbed and drained

Momently by the terror of her husband,
Whose every pulse seems to her a suspicion.

Yolanda. And it is you . . . you who have
urged again

His doubt that would have sunk!

Vittia. It was enough

Merely to sigh—and fear her innocence

Can only seem simple as dew again

If you wed freely Camarin of Paphos.

Yolanda. And that you could! though in her
heart remorse

Trampled and tore!

Though with the wounds of battle he you “love”

Is livid still.

Vittia. And grieves?—Be comforted!

For *he* is—now security has come.

[*Shows the ring; YOLANDA falls back.*

As *he* is, do not fear.

Yolanda. Amaury! . . . Oh!

My father’s gift—so desecrated? So?—

Ah, you are merciless!

Vittia. Only aware
How to compel your pity to my ends;
For you will spare his mother.

Yolanda. Yielding—still,
And past all season of recovery?
Shattering love for ever at my feet?
No, you are duped. For empty, cold are the
veins
Now of submission in me; numb and dead
The pleading of it. And upon you, back,
I cast the burden of your cruelty.

[*Slowly.*

And—if she dies in terror of the lips
Of Renier Lusignan—on your peace
The guilt be!

Vittia. Fa.

Yolanda. The heaping mass of horror!

Vittia (moved). Liar, on her own; for she has
sinned.

Yolanda. And suffered!

But you—

Vittia. I say her own. I've done no crime.
And you will wed him.

Yolanda. Or, . . . Venetian—
Wed you to Remorse!
For there at the gates that guard your rest you
hear

Dim now the risen phantom cries of it,
The presage beat of them like hungry hands
That will o'erwhelm you!

All that I could to spare her I have done;
All that was duty and of love the most.
But you it was who struck and kindled first
Within lord Renier fire of suspicion.

And you it is—
Since in the worst that live there yet is heaven!—
Must null his doubt and ease the sobbing ebb
And flood of her sick spirit; you who must
Go to his fear and with persuasion say
That it is folly of him and of you
So to suspect her, since in Camarin's
Arms I was found. You will!

Vittia.

And—then go pray?

[Draws out the papers scornfully.]

Rather I'll bring you this:—Authority
Sent me of Venice
To make Amaury lordly over Cyprus,
Or to abase him even of Famagouste;
Which I will do—

[Goes to her.]

Unless I have the pledge that you will wed,
Though not to be his wife and free to leave him,
This Paphian,
And with him from Lusignan hence will pass.

[CAMARIN appears on loggia.]

And he has come now for your answer.

Yolanda.

Here!

In league with you! in this!

Vittia.

Most loyally;

And ready skilfully to disavow,
With every force, your innocence—if you
Attempt betrayal!—

Enter, my lord of Paphos—I have spoken.

[CAMARIN *enters desperately*

But she has pledged no further—though the life
Of Berengere Lusignan fall for it,
And though Amaury . . . But you may avail.

[*Moves off.* YOLANDA *stands silently between them.* CAMARIN *looks at her, falters, then turns on VITTIA.*

Camarin. As an anchorite covets, Venetian,
Immortal calm, I crave and covet this!
Yet . . . I will not entreat it of her more.

Vittia. What!

Camarin. Fate may fall. I swore in dread, but
will not!

Yolanda (low). Madonna!

Vittia. You refuse?

Yolanda. He does.

Vittia. The whole?

Yolanda. Lady of Venice, yes; for very shame!

[*With deep joy.*

Bitterly tho' it be, he must, for shame!

For though he would waste the air of the world to
 keep

The breath still in the veins

Of her his love so wronged,

He cannot ask me more than breast can bear—

Knowing I have already borne for her

Infection worse than fetid marshes send

From Mesaoria—

Have lost the sky of love that I had arched

And all the stars of it. See, he is dumb!—

He cannot.

Camarin (coldly). No; but to your heart I
 leave her

And to your pity.

Yolanda. Say not pity to me!

[*The word overwhelms her anew.*]

Am I not needy, fain of it, and can

Endurance ever dure!

What have I left . . .

Of joy to ripple in me or of light

To sway me to forgetting—I to whom

Dawn was enchanted incense once, and day,
The least of earth, an ides of heaven bliss.
What to me left! to me!
Who shepherded each happy flock of waves
Running with silvery foaming there to shore,
Who numbered the little leaves with laughing
 names
Out of my love,
And quickened the winds with quicker winds of
 hope,
That now are spent . . . as summer waters,
Leaving my breast a torrent's barren bed.
Pity and pity! ever pity! No.

[*Enter HASSAN.*

A nun to pity I will be no more.
But you, cruel Venetian . . . Ah, ah,
Mother of God! is there no gentleness
In thee to move her and dissolve away
This jeopardy congealing over us?

[*A pause.*

Vittia. You see, none.

Yolanda. Ah, for sceptre and for might
Then to compel you.

Vittia. Still, there is none.

Yolanda. None . . .

[Sinks to a seat in despair.]

Yet could I think!

Hassan. Lady Yolanda—

[Advances.]

Yolanda. Were

My brain less weary!

Hassan. Lady Yolanda—

Yolanda. Well?

Hassan. There is a means—a might.

Yolanda. Well?

[Is half heedless.]

Hassan. To compel her.

Yolanda. To . . . what?

Hassan. If you will dare it.

Yolanda. Will—?

[Rises.]

Hassan. I swear.

Yolanda. Your thought! I have no fear.

Hassan. Then . . . let me but

Seize her and shut her fast an hour within

The leprous keep, and she shall write whate'er

You order; then upon a vessel quick

Be sent to Venice whence she came.

Camarin. Mad! mad!

Venice would rise!

Hassan. And Cyprus, to be free!—

But 'tis not, lady! and lord Renier

Shall have a letter of her guile and flight.

Venture it, venture!

Yolanda (after a long pause). If it can be done,
It shall be.

Hassan. Ah!

Yolanda. And must be.

Vittia. Fools, to me!

*[She stands defensive, as HASSAN prepares to
close in.]*

Yolanda. Quickly, and take her.

Hassan. Now.

Camarin (with sudden horror). No! . . . Sateless God!

[His eyes are fixed on the balcony. All look, appalled. For slowly down the steps comes RENIER following BERENGERE, whose eyes turn back in fluttering trance upon him.]

Yolanda. Ah! . . . he will kill her! Stop, my lord! mother!

Lord Renier!

[Runs; takes BERENGERE in her arms.]

Cold is she, stony pale,
And sinking! . . . Go away from her, go, go!

Renier. No . . . she shall tell me.

Yolanda. Mother! . . . Tell you that
You are her murderer?

Renier. The truth!

Yolanda. The truth!

[Laughs bitterly, and at a loss, as if amazed.]
Then, almost against her will—

Send for the priest and for Amaury, for
 Laughter and lights and revelry—for all
 Within this castle. But first to her bed,
 And to tranquillity,
 She must be borne, she your cold violence
 Has driven here. . . . Alessa—Tremitus!

[*They have entered.*]

Lead her within. O mother! piteous mother!—
 Ah, it was ruthless, kindless!

Renier.

We shall see.

[*To HASSAN.*]

Bid Moro and Amaury.—As for her,
 I soon may come and seek forgiveness.

Berengere.

No!

[*HASSAN goes.*]

My brain and breath! . . . the pall . . . where am
 I . . . how
 Long must I lie! . . .

Tremitus.

She speaks to visions. So,

So can the blood do—trick us utterly!

[He supports her—with ALESSA—slowly up steps and off. YOLANDA covers her eyes. HASSAN returns with MORO, then, and with AMAURY, whose look seeks VITTIA.]

Yolanda (as all stand silent). Speak, speak, and tell him!

Renier. Yes, Amaury . . . you

Are sent for to behold Yolanda wed,

As you commanded,

Here unto Camarin. Shame has till now

Withheld her, but . . . what ails you?

Amaury. On; go on.

The sudden blood up to my wounds.

Renier. It has,

I say, withheld her. But she now has chosen.

Amaury. So; and . . . it is well. And here are her

Vows I have kept—

[Takes a packet from his breast.]

Vows and remembrances . . . I shall aspire—

[Hands it; she lets it fall.]

Aspire to loathe her not o'ermuch; and to—

To keep my sword from him that now she weds.

[His voice breaks tonelessly.]

Come, let it be.

Yolanda. Amaury!

Amaury (angrily). Priest, be brief!

MORO (*before them; as CARAMIN takes YOLANDA'S hand*).

The Church invests me, and the powers of

This island, here to make you man and wife.

Be joined, ye who have sinned,

In soul, peace and repentances for ever.

[He signs the cross. YOLANDA stands dazed. A silence. Then a shuddering cry and all turn toward the balcony, where ALESSA bursts, pale and wild and striving to speak.]

Yolanda (with dread, awe, premonition). Alessa!

Alessa. Lady Yolanda! you have wed him?

Yolanda (pausing). Yes.

Alessa. Lady Berengere is dead.

Yolanda. No! . . . No!

[Chokes rebelliously.

It cannot be! mother! cannot! awake her!

And tell her I have wed him! mother! cannot!

[Goes trembling, belieflessly, up the balcony. A strange doubt seizes AM-AURY. On the rest is silence, consternation, and fear.

CURTAIN

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ACT IV

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SCENE: *The Chapel of the Castle—or Chapel of the Magdalen—a few hours later. It is of stone, low-arched, gloomy, and adorned with Byzantine mosaics of gaunt saints on backgrounds of gold. The altar is in the rear, and above it a large window, through which pours the still moon. In front of it, to either side, rise two pillars supporting the roof, and on one of them, halfway up, stands a stone image of the Magdalen. Forward are two other pillars whose bases form seats. The right wall has, set midway, a large door hung with heavy curtains. In the rear are smaller doors leading to a sacristy. The altar lamp and a few tapers burn. ALESSA enters, rubbing her eyes as if to clear them of vision, looks around, then calls uncertainly—*

Alessa. Good father! Father Moro! . . . He is
not here.

[Rubs her eyes again.]

The dead are strange! I knew not of their power.
It is as if her spirit still imprisoned
Hovered beneath the pallor of her face
And strove to speak. Good father!

[Enter MORO.]

Ah, you were

There in the sacristy.

Moro. Yes. Your desire?

Alessa. The acolytes summoned from Fama-
gouste

To aid your rites before her burial

Have come, and wait.

Moro. Send hither two.

[Looks closely at her.]

Alessa. At once.

[Is going. He stops her.]

Moro. Woman, this passes silence. There must
be

Some question. Do you understand this wedding?
The evil that has risen in this house?
Do you?

Alessa. I may not speak.

Moro. And wherefore may not?

Alessa. I may not. It is best.

Moro. As says Yolanda,
Who is to-day impenetrable in all.
But who, now, in a lofty grief above
The misery that blasted her, seems calm,
And answers only,—
“God in His season will,
I trust, unfold it soon; I cannot, now!” . . .
And yet by chance I heard
Her darkly bid the Paphian be gone—
From here—without her.

Alessa. And he would not?

Moro. No.

Does she not see Amaury dangerous

For truth—which you conceal?

Alessa.

The acolytes

Are waiting.

Moro.

Go . . . But if this hour brings forth

What you shall rue——

Alessa.

Father!

[*Goes quickly, troubled.*]

Moro.

In blindness still!

For Vittia Pisani, who alone

Seems with these twain to share this mystery

Is silent to all importunity.

Oh, Berengere Lusignan!—

But, 'tis mine

To pray and to prepare. (*Listens.*) The acolytes.

[*Two enter, sleek, sanctimonious.*]

(*To Them.*) Come here . . . You're Serlio,

Of the Ascension. You?

2nd Acolyte.

Hilarion.

From Santa Maria by the Templars' well,

Which God looks on with gratitude, father.

For though we're poor and are unworthy servants

We've given willingly our widow's mite.

And now we . . .

Moro. You are summoned to this place
For ministrations other than the tongue's.
Prepare that altar—masses for the dead.

Hilarion. Man is as grass that withers!

Moro. Kindle all
Its tapers. The departed will be borne
Hither for holy care and sacred rest.
So do—then after
Look to that image of the Magdalen,
Once it has fallen.

Serlio. Domine, dirige!

[MORO goes. They put off cant and set to
work.]

Hilarion (insolently, lighting a taper).

We'll have good wine for this!

Serlio. The Chian! Hee!
None's like the Chian! and to-morrow, meat!
Last week old Ugo died and we had pheasant.

Hilarion. When we are priests we'll give no
comforting
To wife or maid—till we have sipped!

Serlio. And supped!
Though 'tis a Friday and the Pope is dead!

[*Silence. They work faster.*]

Hilarion. There, it is done. Now to the image.
[*Mounts pillar.*]

Serlio. Well,
Olympio, the cock who fetched us, said
That image fell first on the day—

Hilarion. Tchuck! tchuck!
Better no breath about that lord of Paphos,
Or any here. For till the dead are three
Days gone, you know—! But there's the woman.
Feign.

[*As ALESSA re-enters; hypocritically.*]

The blessed dead! in Purgatory may
They briefly bide.

Serlio. Aye! aye!

Alessa (still troubled). What say you?

Hilarion.

Ah!

I lay that it is wiser never to foul
The dead, even in thinking,
For they may hear us, none can say, and once
My mother saw a dead man who had gone
Unshriven start up white and cry out loud
When he was curst.

Serlio. O Lord!

Alessa (staring). No! . . . Well, such things
There are perchance. And now they say that Venus,
The Anadyomene, who once ruled this isle,
Is come again. . . . But you have finished? Soon
They bring her body here.

Hilarion. Now have I, now!

It will not totter again.

[*Descends.*

Alessa. Would that it might

Upon the head of— (*catches herself; calmly*)

You are awaited

There in the sacristy. . . . The chant begins!

[*The acolytes go. She grows more disquieted.*

Begins! and lady Yolanda still awaits
 Heedless, though Lord Amaury's desperate,
 As is the Paphian! . . . They near! . . . The curtains!
 tains!

[Goes to door and draws them back. As she does so the chant swells louder. Then the cortège enters—MORO, the acolytes with tapers; BERENGERE on a litter, AMAURY, RENIER, VITTIA, the women, HASSAN, and last YOLANDA. The litter, AMAURY by it, comes to the altar; the chanting ceases.]

Moro (as AMAURY bows, shaken).

No moan or any toil of grief be here
 Where we have brought her for sainted appeal.
 But in this holy place until the tomb
 Let her find rest.

Amaury. Set down the bier.

[It is placed.]

Moro. Lone rest!

Then bliss Afar for ever!

Amaury (rises). Be it so!

[*Turning; brokenly.*

But unto any, mother, who have brought thee
 Low to this couch, be never ease again.
 To any who have put thy life out, never!
 But in them be the burning that has seemed
 To shrivel thee—whether with pain or fear!
 And be appeaseless tears,
 Salt tears that rust the fountain of the heart.

[*Sinks to a seat. A pause.*

Moro. My son, relentless words.

Amaury (up again). To the relentless!

Moro. God hear you not!

Amaury. Then is He not my God.

Moro. Enough, enough. (*To the rest.*) But
 go and for her soul

Freight all of you this tide of night with prayer.

Amaury. Never!

Moro. I bid.

Amaury. And I forbid those who
 Have prized her not!

For though nought's in the world but prayer may
 move,

Still but the lips that loved her
 Should for her any sin beseeching lift.

[*Looking at YOLANDA.*

They and no other!

Yolanda. It is well.

Amaury. Not one.

Yolanda. Then, mother—

[*Goes to bier.*

Amaury. That name again?

Yolanda. While I have breath.

[*Fixedly.*

Yes, though you hold me purgeless of that sin
 Only the pale archangels may endure
 Trembling to muse on!
 Or though yon image of the Magdalen,
 Whose alabaster broke amid her tears
 And her torn hair, forbade me with a voice.
 And you, whose heart is shaken
 As in a tomb a taper's flame, would know

I speak with love.

Camarin. Unswerving!

Amaury. Then, by Christ,
Aye, and the world that craves His blood, I think
She, if she would, or you, could point to me,
Or you, Vittia Pisani,
The reason of this sudden piteous death
Hard on the haunted flight before my father,
Whose lips refuse.

Camarin. She knows no shred of it.

Amaury. You lie to say it.

Camarin. Then will, still—if there
Is need.

Amaury. Because you love her?

Yolanda. Peace, peace, peace.

Amaury. A hollow word for what had never
being.

Yolanda. Look on her face and see.

Amaury (at bier). Upon her face!

Where not oblivion the void of death
Has hid away, or can, the agony

Of her last terror—but it trembles still.
 I tell you, no. Grief was enough, but now
 Through it has risen mystery that chokes
 As a miasma from Iscariot's tomb.
 And till this pall of doubt be rent away
 No earth shall fall and quicken with her dust!
 But I will search her face . . . till it reveals.

Camarin. He raves.

Amaury. Iscariot! yes!

Yolanda. Again, peace, peace!

Amaury. That you may palter!

Yolanda (gently). That she may not grieve.

[*Goes again to bier.*]

For—if her soul is near—it now is wrung.
 Near! would it were to hear me and impart
 Its yearning and regret to us who live,
 Its dim unhappiness and hollow want.
 Yes, mother, were you now about us, vain,
 Invisible and without any voice
 To tell us of you!
 Were you and now could hear through what of cold

Or silence wrap you, oh, so humanly,
 And seeming but a veil—
 Then would you hear me say—

[Suddenly aghast.

Ah, God!

Amaury.

Yolanda!

[She starts back from the bier.

Yolanda!

Renier. Girl, what rends you?

Yolanda.

Saw you not?

[Rushes to bier and shakes it

Mother! you hear me? mother!

Renier.

Girl!

Yolanda.

She breathes!

[Consternation. Some fall to their knees.

Vittia. What? what?

Yolanda.

Mother! Her breast!

Mother! She moves!

Amaury. God! God!

Yolanda. Stand off from her . . . Mother!

Camarin.

Her eyes! . . .

They open! open!

Yolanda. Mother! . . .

Amaury. See; her lips!

They strive to speak! O faintly, O so faint!

Can you not hear?

Berengere. Yolanda!

Yolanda. Mother!

Berengere. Renier!

Renier. Yes, yes?

Berengere. Yolanda—

Renier. Speak!

Berengere. Christ, save me . . . Christ!

Yolanda's innocent, and I . . . 'twas I.

Amaury. What? what is it she says?

Berengere. Camarin! Ah!

*[She shudders and dies, amid low-uttered
awe. RENIER bends, lays his hand a
moment on her breast, then, with a
cry of rage, springs from her and
draws, and rushes on CAMARIN, who
awaits him, desperate.]*

Amaury (confused, as they engage).

Yolanda; what is this?

Yolanda. Amaury, in!

Compel lord Renier back! he cannot live,

You only could against Camarin now!

Wait not to question, but obey me! if—

You ever—! (*as he rushes in*) Holy Magdalen,
defend him!

[RENIER *falls back.*

Now, now defend him, if to chastity

Thou'rt vowed in heaven.

Vittia. Fool! . . . Camarin, strike!

Yolanda. He's wounded!

Camarin. Oh! . . . Berengere! . . . treachery!

[*He staggers and sinks back heavily toward the pillar. There is breathless, strained suspense. Then the image above, unsettled and shaken by his fall, sways, totters and crushes upon him. A cry, "The Magdalen!" goes up around.*

Hassan (hurrying to him; after awe and silence).
He's dead.

Alessa. The Magdalen!

Hassan. No breath in him.

[*A pause.*

Renier (low, harshly).

Bear him without then ever from this place,
That never more shall know a holy rite—
And from these gates, I care not to what tomb.

[*To AMAURY.*

Then shall you hear this mystery's content,
That still as a madness measures to your sight.
Bear him without.

[*The limp body is borne away. All follow but*

AMAURY, YOLANDA, RENIER.

Now you shall hear, with shame,
But with exalted pride and happy tears;
Then come obliteration!
Speak, girl . . . Nobility
Had never better title to its truth.

[*Kisses her hand and goes.*

Amaury. Yolanda! . . . He? . . . This reverence as to

An angel? Speak!

Yolanda. Amaury—

Amaury. O pause not!

Yolanda. Then—to save her who's dead—from death and shame.

I took her place within the Paphian's arms.

Amaury. O! . . . and by me, driven by me, bore this?

[*Overcome.*

Pure as the rills of Paradise, endured?

Yolanda. For you!—and her who sleeps forgiven there,

[*Raptly.*

Now while her spirit weightless overwingeth
 Night, to that Throne whose haven heals all shame!
 For her I did! but oh, for you, whose least
 Murmur to me is infinite with Spring,
 Whose smile is light, filling the air with dawn,
 Whose touch, wafture of immortality

Unto my weariness; and whose eyes, now,
Are as the beams God lifted first, they tell us,
Over the uncreated,
In the far singing mother-dawn of the world!—
Come with me then, but tearless, to her side.

*[They go to the bier and stand as in a
dream. A pause; then her lips move,
last, as if inspired.]*

While there is sin to sway the soul and sink it,
Pity should be as strong as love or death!

*[With a cry of joy he enfolds her, and
they kneel, wrapped about with the
clear moon.]*

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

FIRST PUBLISHED 1914

To
A. S. H.

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AT THE WORLD'S HEART

I

I leant my ear to the world's heart,
(Beat, beat, beat!)
I leant my ear to the world's heart,
Where all its voices meet.
I heard them sound together,
I heard them surge alone,
The far, the near and the nether,
The known — and the unknown.
From desert they rose and mountain,
From city and sea and plain,
And the voices, all, to one voice
Blent, in the bitter pain:

*We are the people of Sorrow,
Haled from the silent earth,*

*Happy is it,
Happy is love —
Happier should be birth!
We come to the land of the living,
We go to the realm of death,
We bide for a day
And then . . . away!
O why are we given breath!*

II

I leant my ear to the world's heart,
(Leant, more nigh!)
A saddened ear to the world's heart,
Fain for a sweeter cry.
There came the murmur of nations,
With languor loud, or need,
The sighing of devastations,
Of deed and dark misdeed;
There came the moan of the millions,
Against their tyrant kind,

But in it I heard great Hope's word
Groping, a way to find:

*We are the people begotten
Between Delight and Pain,
Certain is birth,
Certain are They
To breed our like again.
But tho we have filled the valleys
And the sea and the hills with death . . .
It shattered there
Into the prayer,
O why are we given breath!*

III

I leant my ear to the world's heart,
(Long, then, long!)
A closer ear to the world's heart,
And lo — it beat more strong!
And the building of human beauty,
The crushing of human crime,

The music of human duty
Outclarioned fate and time.
Yea over the cry of sorrow
And doubt that is ever brief
There rose the lay of a New Day,
The high voice of Belief:

*We are the people of Patience,
Who wait — and look before.
Silent is birth,
Silent the tomb,
But silent Life no more!
Our gods are becoming One God,
And tho there is ever death,
We yet shall learn,
At some day's turn,
Why — why we are given breath!*

SEA RHAPSODY

(Out of Hongkong)

Never again, never again

Did I hope to breathe such joy!

The sea is blue and the winds halloo

Up to the sun "Ahoy!"

"Ahoy!" they shout and the mists they rout

From the mountain-tops go streaming

In happy play where the gulls sway,

And a million waves are gleaming!

And every wave, billowing brave,

Is tipped with a wild delight.

A garden of isles around me smiles,

Bathed in the blue noon light.

The rude brown bunk of the fishing junk
Seems fair as a sea-king's palace:
O wine of the sky the gods have spilt
Out of its crystal chalice!

For wine is the wind, wine is the sea,
Glad wine for the sinking spirit,
To lift it up from the cling of clay
Into high Bliss — or near it!
So let me drink till I cease to think,
And know with a sting of rapture
That joy is yet as wide as the world
For men at last to capture!

“THE MONSOON BREAKS!”

(India)

I

Panting, panting, panting,
O the terrible heat!
The fields crack
And the ryot's back
Bursts with the cruel beat.
The wells of the land are empty;
Six hundred feet, in vain,
The oxen lower the buckets o'er
And draw them up again.

Panting, panting, panting:
Parched are the earth and sky.
The elephant in the jungle
Sucks root and river dry.

The tiger, in whose throat
The desert seems to burn,
Paces the path,
The pool path —
But only to return.

O the terrible heat!
O the peacock's cry!
The whine of monkeys in the trees,
The children crawling on their knees.
O the terrible heat!
The gods will let us die:
Shiva and Parvati and all
To whom we beat the drum and call,
Vouch to us no reply.

II

Panting, panting, panting:
The plague is drawing near.
Hot is the sun, hot is the night,
And in the heat is fear.

The plague, of famine mate,
Is fumbling at the latch.
Soon his step —
Death-step! —
Listening we shall catch.

O! . . . soon his step!
There's heard the funeral chant;
There's smelt the funeral pyre;
The ghat is red with fire.
O the terrible heat!
The gods are adamant.
Will the monsoon
Let us swoon
Unto the last heart-beat?

III

Panting, panting, panting
Go up toward the sea
And look again, ye holy men,
To learn if clouds may be.

Go up into your temples
With sacrifice and song.
Call to the gods,
The cruel gods,
Who beat us down with rays like rods:
Say that we wait too long!

Say that the wells are dry,
Say that our flesh is sand,
Say that the mother's milk is pain,
The child beats at her breast in vain,
Say that we curse the land.
O the terrible heat!
Say that even the moon
In fiery flight
Scorches the night.
O bring us the monsoon!

IV

Panting, panting, panting:
The nautch-girl cannot sing,

But drops her vina in the dust
And sinks, a shrivelled thing.
The fakir has acquired
No merit for six days,
But at the tank,
The shrine's tank,
That never before of vileness stank,
Babbles of water sprays.

v

O the terrible heat!
How long must we endure?
The holy men have come again,
The beating drums are fewer.
A cobra in their path
Licked out an angry tongue
Into the air —
O with despair
Is even the serpent stung!

VI

Panting, panting, panting:
The night again, and day;
And day again, and night again,
Burning their endless way.
The furnace sun goes down,
The branding stars come out
 And sear the eyes
Like fiery flies
Settling upon them — O ye skies,
A drop for us, we pray!

But one — upon the tongue!
To let us know you care.
But one — tho it be wrung
Of breath sent up in prayer.
O the terrible heat!
Again the beating drums.
What do I hear?
A cry? a cheer? . . .

The priests are chanting? nearer, near? . . .
Is it the monsoon comes?

The priests are chanting! . . . O,
What word is on their lips!
“The monsoon breaks! the monsoon breaks!”
A darkness sudden grips
My eyes: is it the shroud
Of blindness, or — a cloud?
The monsoon breaks?
The rain awakes?
Out of the darkened sky it shakes? —
Louder they cry, and loud!

O loud! until at last
The people hear bedazed;
The sick who drank of burning air,
The weak, the well, the crazed!
The temple's sacred cow
Lows gently at the door;
The fakir makes his vow

And chants his Vedic lore;
But all lift up
Their lips' cup
And drink more of it, more!

And singing fills the air! . . .
And soon the Summer's song
Of greenness covers all the earth,
For long the rain is, long!
The rice is flooded far;
While Shiva, Indra, all
The gods, who are the world's laws,
Are lulled to sleep,
In temples deep,
By praises without pause.

IN AN ORIENTAL HARBOUR

All the ships of the world come here,
Rest a little, then set to sea;
Some ride up to the waiting pier,
Some drop anchor beyond the quay.
Some have funnels of blue and black,
(Some come once but come not back!)
Some have funnels of red and yellow,
Some — O war! — have funnels of gray.

All the ships of the world come here,
Ships from every billow's foam;
Fruiter and oiler, collier drear,
Liner and lugger and tramp a-roam.
Some are scented of palm and pine,
(Some are fain for the Pole's far clime).
Some are scented of soy and senna,
Some — ah me! — are scented of home.

All the ships of the world come here,
Day and night there is sound of bells,
Seeking the port they calmly steer,
Clearing the port they ring farewells.
Under the sun or under the stars
(Under the light of swaying spars),
Under the moon or under morning
Murmur they, as the tide swells.

All the ships of the world come here,
Rest a little and then are gone,
Over the crystal planet-sphere
Swept, thro every season, on.
Swept to every cape and isle
(Every coast of cloud or smile),
Swept till over them sweeps the sorrow
Of their last sea-dawn.

THE THRALL OF THE DEAD

(*China*)

Out of the earth, out of the earth
The innumerable dead
Thrust forth their phantom hands to seize
The living overhead;
Ancestral hands from every field,
By every hut and hill;
Ancestral hands that ever wield
Strong Superstition's will;
Ancestral hands by every grave,
And graves are everywhere,
Tho strong sweet grain might grow instead
To lighten famine's care.

Out of the earth, out of the earth,
North, east and south and west,
The souls of father, brother, son,
Crave worship, without rest;
Claim rites and reverence and fear,
For Ill is in their hands;
Claim progeny, who too must rear
Yet more, for death's demands;
Claim sons — and sons — tho millions stare,
And millions see no shape
But that of Hunger, gaunt and bare,
From which is no escape.

Out of the earth — the haunted earth! —
O is there no surcease?
Will Custom never loose its clutch
Upon this people's peace?
Must life be ever slave to death —
A coolie at the tomb?
Must it forever draw no breath
But where the grave has room?

Must not a fruit or flower spring
But they are corpse-begot?
O shall there be no fair expanse
The buried do not blot?

God of the world, God of the world,
To carven stick or stone
Should all these millions rather pray
Than unto rotted bone.

O rather to the earth, the moon,
To light the warm sun gives,
To Spring, to Summer on the hills —
To anything that lives!

So let the wind of Knowledge sweep
From Thibet to the sea
And save the living from the dead,
Now and eternally.

Yea let the cleansing of it flash,
Until this land again
Shall be no charnel, but the home
Of free and living men.

THE PEASANT OF IRIMACHI

(Japan)

At the time of candle-lighting and rest,
When the shoji-panes are softly aglow,
When the rice within the bowl seems blest
By Buddha — and the mists creep low,
I sit upon the mats, and you,
O-Kuni, from the grave, come back.
I hear at the door
Your geta on the floor
As you slip like a moon thing thro.

You have come across the twilit fields,
For you know that in the shrine I have set
All the offerings the long day yields,
And know that I never can forget!

You know that I am lonely and wait
From temple bell at night to bell at morn.
And so when you glide,
A shadow, to my side,
All the longings in my heart abate.

Yet they say it is not well — the priests,
And they bid me let the love-fires die,
But I go unto their fanes and feasts
And never can they tell me why!
Such love is karma-sent, they say,
And binds me to a thousand births.
But still with the night
I set the candle light
And you come when the mists creep gray.

So I toil: with the yoke upon my brow
Bear the burden of the beasts: so poor
That the lowliest neglect my bow,
And my gifts the very gods scarce endure.

But still I have the thatch and the shrine
And night, O-Kuni, for my peace.
So till I am flung
Under earth, like the dung,
I shall set the shoji-light to shine.

THE BROKEN TRANCE

(Kamakura, Japan)

Blue, blue skies above the Great Buddha bend,
The crêpe-myrtle blooms,
The sêmi sing about,
The dragon-fly gleams against the pine-tree glooms,
The crows upon the hill
In derision shout.

“What,” they caw, to the worshipers that come,
“O what is your god
And Nirvana’s empty sleep!”
The lotos-throng seated on the pale pool nod,
But heed not at all,
And to meditation keep.

Keep; tho sad, over Shaka's silent calm,

A shade creeps strange —

O is it from the pines?

Or is it doubting prescience of the peaceless change

Enveloping his East

That he too divines?

Sees he how, since its wedding with the West,

Desire born anew

And Maya shall increase

Till all the world's soul again is bound, past rue,

Upon the Wheel of Things

With none to release?

Ay, and how sutra years and centuries

Shall fall soon away

From peoples that he found

And taught, all-compassionate, to live their day

In simplest content

Till beyond life's bound?

Blue, blue skies above the Great Buddha bend,
The crêpe-myrtle blooms,
The sêmi sing about,
The dragon-fly gleams against the pine-tree glooms;
But never from His Face
Shall be swept that doubt.

THE PEASANT OF GOTEMBA

(Japan)

The scarecrow in the fields
Is not so poor as I;
Standing amid the rice
He makes the crows fly high;
But if I stood they only
Would pluck me more awry.

But him I envy not,
For he has never heard
Airs in the young bamboo
Breathe low the wind-god's word.
So deaf is he that Summer
Can wake him with no bird.

And blind he is, as well,
 Since he has never seen
Wild Fujiyama geese,
 Far up above the green,
Flecking the dim white summit
 Snow covers, ever clean.

And he has not a thatch
 To shelter his torn head,
Nor a son's hand to pay
 Shrine-rites when he is dead.
His poor old straw in winter
 Will to the ox be fed.

So poverty alone
 Is not too dire for those
To whom is given a glimpse
 Behind life's fleeting shows
Into the boundless beauty
 The blessed Buddha knows.

SUBMARINE MOUNTAINS

Under the sea, which is their sky, they rise
 To watery altitudes as vast as those
 Of far Himàlayan peaks impent in snows
 And veils of cloud and sacred deep repose.
Under the sea, their flowing firmament,
 More dark than any ray of sun can pierce,
 The earthquake thrust them up with mighty tierce
And left them to be seen but by the eyes
Of awed imagination inward bent.

Their vegetation is the viscid ooze,
 Whose mysteries are past belief or thought.
 Creation seems around them devil-wrought,
 Or by some cosmic urgence gone distraught.
Adown their precipices chill and dense

With the dank midnight creep or crawl or climb
Such tentacled and eyeless things of slime,
Such monster shapes as tempt us to accuse
Life of a miscreative impotence.

About their peaks the shark, their eagle, floats,
In the thick azure far beneath the air,
Or downward sweeps upon what prey may dare
Set forth from any silent weedy lair.
But one desire on all their slopes is found,
Desire of food, the awful hunger strife;
Yet here, it may be, was begun our life
Here all the dreams on which our vision dotes
In unevolved obscurity were bound.

Too strange it is, too terrible! And yet
It matters not how we were wrought or whence
Life came to us with all its throb intense
If in it is a Godly Immanence.
It matters not, — if haply we are more

Than creatures half-conceived by a blind force
That sweeps the universe in a chance course:
For only in Unmeaning Might is met
The intolerable thought none can ignore.

THE PILGRIM

(As a temple bell sounds)

A temple bell! . . .
And lo, to me,
Who fare far out at sea,
It brings the gloom
Of the temple room —
And the holy image
Of Buddha seated
Upon his lotos!

And so I pray:
"O Calm One! in
The new lives that I win
Let me as the sound

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

Of a bell be found
To waken worship
In souls that wander
Toward Nirvana!"

PAGEANTS OF THE SEA

What memories have I of it,
The sea, continent-clasping,
The sea whose spirit is a sorcery,
The sea whose magic foaming is immortal!
What memories have I of it thro the years!

What memories of its shores!
Its shadowy headlands doomed to stay the storm;
Its red cliffs clawing ever into the tides;
Its misty moors of royal heather purpling;
Its channeled marshes, village-nesting hills;
Its crags wind-eaten, homes of hungry gulls;
Its bays —
With sailless masts that swing to harbour tides
Until on wings at last they sweep away.

What memories have I too
Of faring out at dawn o'er tameless waters,
Upon the infinite wasted yearning of them,
While winds, the mystic harp-strings of the world,
Were sounding sweet farewells;
While coast and lighthouse tower were fading fast,
And from me all the world slipped like a garment.

What memories of mid-deeps!
Of heaving on thro haunted vasts of foam,
Thro swaying terrors of tormented tides;
While the wind, no more singing, took to raving,
In rhythmic infinite words,
A chantey ancient and immeasurable
Concerning man and God.

What memories of fog-spaces —
Wide leaden deserts of dim wavelessness,
Smooth porpoise-broken glass
As gray as a dream upon despair's horizon;

What sailing soft till lo the shroud was lifted
And suddenly there came, as a great joy,
The blue sublimity of summer skies,
The azure mystery of happy heavens,
The passionate sweet parley of the breeze,
And dancing waves — that lured us on and on
Past islands o'er whose verdant mountain-heads
Enchanted clouds were hanging,
And whence wild spices wandered;
Past iridescent reefs and vessels bound
For ports unknown:
O far, far past, until the sun, in fire,
An impotent and shrunken Orb lay dying,
On heaving twilight purple gathered round.

And then, what nights!
The phantom moon in misty resurrection
Arising from her sepulchre in the East
And sparkling the dark waters —
The unremembering moon!
And covenants of star to faithful star,

Dewy, like tears of God, across the sky;
And under the moon's fair ring Orion running
Forever in great war adown the West.
The nights, the infinite nights!
With cloud-horizons where the lightning slumbered
Or wakened once and again with startled watch,
Again to fall asleep
And leave the moon-path free for all my thoughts
To wander peacefully.
The nights, the opiate nights!
Until the stars sighed out in dawn's great pallor,
Just as the lands of my desire appeared.

What memories have I of it!

THE MALAY TO HIS MASTER

The woman is mine, O chief,
White chief whom the spirits fear;
The woman is mine,
I have bought her with blood,
My mark is upon her brow.
I swept like a shark the sea,
O lord of unbelief,
I swept with a trusty score to her isle
And brought her home in my prau!

She lay in her atap-thatch,
Clad — ah! — in her red sarong.
The cocoanut palms
In the wind she heard,

But never my paddles near.
I seized her with mating arms —
O chief, no moon is her match! —
She cried to the hunting-men of her tribe,
But lo, I carried her clear;

And tossed her across the surf!
O chief, she is mine not yours! —
I bore her away
Tho the pearls of her teeth
Bit deep and her rage beat blind.
A hundred of hissing darts,
Each dipt in a venom's scurf,
Slid after us like swift asps of air,
But ever they sank behind.

And so she is mine, twice mine,
For when in the jungle here
I hid her, O lord,
And sang to her heart
And planted the rubber round,

And bought her your rings and silks
And bracelets jewel-fine,
And swept her with kisses like the sea,
At last was her long hate drowned.

And so she is mine, is mine!
White chief, you must give her back.
I bought her with blood,
I will keep her with blood,
So summon your heart from lust,
Or swift, as you say the night
Of Malaya falls, — at a sign,
My people, led by the gods, shall fall
And make of your passion dust.

NIGHTS ON THE INDIAN OCEAN

Nights on the Indian Ocean,
Long nights of moon and foam,
When silvery Venus low in the sky
Follows the sun home.
Long nights when the mild monsoon
Is breaking south-by-west,
And when soft clouds and the singing shrouds
Make all that is seem best.

Nights on the Indian Ocean,
Long nights of space and dream,
When silent Sirius round the Pole
Swings on, with steady gleam;
When oft the pushing prow
Seems pressing where before

No prow has ever pressed — or shall
From hence forevermore.

Nights on the Indian Ocean,
Long nights — with land at last,
Dim land, dissolving the long sea-spell
Into a sudden past —
That seems as far away
As this our life shall seem
When under the shadow of death's shore
We drop its ended dream.

SIGHTING ARABIA

My heart, that is Arabia, O see!
That talismanic sweep of sunset coast,
Which lies like richly wrought enchant-
ment's ghost
Before us, bringing back youth's witchery!

“Arabian Nights!” At last to us one comes,
The crescent moon upon its purple brow.
Will not Haroun and Bagdad rise up now
There on the shore, to beating of his drums?

Is not that gull a roc? That sail Sindbad's?
That rocky pinnacle a minaret?
Does the wind call to prayer from it? O yet
I hear the fancy, fervid as a lad's!

“Allah il Allah,” rings it; O my heart,
 Fall prostrate, for to Mecca we are near,
 That flashing light is but a sign sent clear
From her, your houri, as her curtains part!

Soon she will lean out from her lattice, soon,
 And bid you climb up to your Paradise,
 Which is her panting lips and passion eyes
Under the drunken sweetness of the moon!

O heart, my heart, drink deeply ere they die,
 The sunset dome, the minaret, the dreams
 Flashing afar from youth's returnless streams:
For we, my heart, must grow old, you and I!

MY COUNTRY

My country, O my country, they call you a Market-
place,

Where only the greed of silver and the gloat of gold
are heard,

Where men care but for getting — a getting that
gives no grace,

Where money-right and money-might are the will
of you and the word.

They call you a land of license — *free* but to thug
and thief!

A servile dumping-place for the dirt of the other
lands;

A pest-house for their crime and their poverty and
grief;

A scavenger of nations — diseased in heart and
hands.

They say you have sons no more — sons native-
born and brave;

That the blood of the alien — and the mad — is in
your veins,

And the venom of anarchy, ungovernable and grave,
Is sweeping toward your heart — is gripping about
your reins.

They say the voice of the people is the voice that
sounds your doom —

Democracy but a monster with a million heads that
rave —

Till the wise, the just and the mighty are banished
to make more room

For the briber and demagogue, for the slanderer
and the slave.

So, Prostitute in your passions, they term you, over
the seas,

A Gaud specious and shallow, loose, vulgar, cunning
and loud;

A Lurer away of the soul from its true immensi-
ties

Into the lies of bigness, into the boasts of the crowd.

My country, O my country, these are the things
they cry,

Your sons who are renegade, your troubled friends
and foes,

And this to them do we answer, who for your fame
would die,

Your lovers deeper reading the heart of your weal
and woes, —

This word to them do we answer: That many a god
men serve,

And Money you, for a moment: tho a worse per-
chance is theirs:

But that you have worshipped it with a force, a
faith and a nerve
Betraying the might within you for loftier temple
cares.
That Money has been your god, your wild Romance
of Youth,
All pardonable to a land with a virgin hope for the
world,
But that you have kept o'er all in the pantheon
of Truth,
One image of endless faith — in a starry flag en-
furled;
Yea, that, if you worshipped Mammon, 'twas ever
because its face
Seemed but as the face of Freedom, your starry-
clad and strong,
And *was*, to many a million of many a martyred
race,
Who hungered — or to your shelter fled tyranny
and wrong.

Wherefore, for the bread you gave them, we say,
they shall pay you strength,

For the great and glad asylum, a harvest of hope
and song.

And out of their shackles broken shall mould for
you, at length,

Perchance a mightier nation — a manhood yet
more strong.

For ever the crime they bring you, as wildly they
escape,

Is but the crime of the ages, that flames in them
at last,

And kindles you unto pity — and progress from the
ape,

Who knows not brotherhood — nor the future from
the past.

So when their cry to the clamour of the Monster
million-voiced

Is joined, and the vaster chorus ascends toward
the Light,

We know, with pride, you will listen — nor fear,
but be rejoiced,
And hear, down under the tumult, still hear, deep-
hid, the Right.

And yet — reproach is a warning of a peril that
may be.

We would not have you niggard of your breasts to
human need,

But now the withholding season has come — until
you see

How truly the milk of freedom makes brothers
every breed.

THE SNAIL AND I

The snail and I cling to the rock,
 We two alone by the glassy sea
 That under the sun draws silently
Its breath, then breaks with spumy shock;
We two; for even the briny pool
 Has not one shambling crab that moves:
 But in its granite glossy grooves
 The pent tide-water warms its face
 And still weeds hang their idle lace
On looms of mosses green and cool.

The snail and I cling to the rock ;
 The tide is slipping inward slow.
 Here to our cleft it soon will flow,
At his shell-house alone to knock.

The tide that daily comes with food
For his dumb small unconscious need
That grows no greater: while I bleed
With wants no feeding brings content —
For dual dreaming man seems meant
On what the world has not to brood.

The snail and I cling to the rock,
Strange comrades whom the sea has cast
Together till such hours have passed
As at my sadness came to knock.
But wherefore did the long day give
Me unto him? lest some gray gull
Should on him gorge a fain crop full?
Infinity alone knows why:
For he was born to live and die,
As I perchance to die and live.

SONGS TO A. H. R.

I

MINGLINGS

It is the old old vision,
The moonlit sea — and you.
I cannot make dis severance
Between the two.
For all the world's wide beauty
To me you seem,
All that I love in shadow
Or glow or gleam.

It is the old old murmur,
The sea's sound and your voice.

God in his Bliss between them
 Could make no choice.
For all the world's deep music
 In you I hear:
Nor shall I ask death, ever,
 For aught more dear.

II

FIDES PERENNIS AMORIS

Tho God should send me,
 When I die,
To the last star
 Across His sky,
And bid all space between us be
Oblivion — one traverseless sea:

Tho He should give me,
 There, a task,
Sweeter than any
 I could ask,

And, with the task, achievement, too,
Greater than all I here shall do:

Yea, tho He purposed
Thus to let
Me, severed from you,
All forget;
Remembrance like a magnet still
Would draw my heart to you and will.

So I should wander
On the marge
Of that new world
With strangeness large,
Leaving my task to turn a face
Somehow toward your dwelling-place.

And I should listen
Thro the stars
To silent hintings
Of lost bars

Of music that was once your voice:
In no dream should I more rejoice.

Or I should tremble
 When the breeze
Brought to my cheek
 Infinities
Of dim forgotten touches love
Once swept me with, like a wing'd dove.

Nor could the presence
 Of His throng
Of noblest spirits
 Hush, for long,
In me the unremembered bliss —
The vanished spell of days like this.

For in the trysting
 Of true souls
There is no distance
 That controls:

Not space nor God can keep them twain —
Only annihilation's reign.

III

HOW MANY WAYS

How many ways the Infinite has

To-night, in earth and sky:

A falling star, a rustling leaf,

The night-wind ebbing by.

How many ways the Infinite has:

A fire-fly over the lea,

A whippoorwill on the wooded hill,

And your dear love to me.

How many ways the Infinite has:

The moon out of the East;

A cloud that waits her shepherding,

To wander silver-fleeced.

How many ways the Infinite has:
A home-light in the West,
And joy deep-glowing in your eyes.
Wherein is all my rest.

IV

LOVE AND INFINITY

Across the kindling twilight moon
A late gull wings to rest.
The sea is murmuring underneath
Its vast eternal quest.
The coast-light flashes o'er the tide
A red and warning eye,
And oh the world is very wide,
But you are nigh!

The stars come out from zone to zone,
The wind knows every one
And blows their message to my heart,
As it has ever done.

“They are all God’s,” it tells me, “all,
However huge or high.”

But ah I could not trust its call —
Were you not by!

v

STAR-WANDERINGS

A down the paths between the stars
Last night we went a-wandering,
The sod of space beneath our feet
Was soft as violet dreams.

Close, close to many a moon that shone
We wandered, hand in hand, alone,
And everything to us was known —
And everything was sweet —
For all the world was as it seems
When love is made complete.

We wandered past Aldebaran
And Vega jewelling the Lyre,

We lost ourselves in nebulas
Of vast Orion's sword.
We called to Sirius, the red,
And O to many a star that's dead,
While echoes back to us were shed
Of life that glorious was,
And while love thro us silent poured
Its peace, without a pause.

We wandered, wandered, on and on,
Thro dwindling shining ways, till space
In all its primal pureness lay,
A starless reach beyond.
And into it we passed to see
If God in such a void could be —
And still the soul of it was He,
As of the starry way.
Then, ah, time touched us with his wand
And all was yesterday.

VI

IN THE NIGHT

When I lie unsleeping,
 When the darkness seems
Like a lonely sepulchre
 Where I'm shut in dreams,
I have but to touch you,
 Reaching thro the night,
Then does all the vast tomb change
 Into living light.

Then does space unbounded
 Fill once more with stars,
While my worn and haunted heart
 Ceases from old wars.
Then does rest come to me,
 And, it may be, sleep:
Such infinitude has love —
 Such watch can it keep.

VII

MONITIONS

Sad as an inland gull, far from the salt wave winging,
Lost or lured from the sea — from all its heart
 has known,
Am I, when I think that death, somewhere, may
 now be bringing
The hour, my love, to sever us, and send each
 wandering lone!

VIII

TRANSFUSION

A shoal-light flashes East,
 And livid lightning West,
The silvery dark night-sea between,
 On which we ride at rest,
And gaze far, far away
 Into the fretless skies,

World-sadness in our thought — but ah,
Content within our eyes.

The ship's bell strikes — the sound

Floats shrouded to our ears,

Then suddenly, as at a touch,

The universe appears

A Presence Infinite

That penetrates our love

And makes us one with night and sea

And all the stars above.

BEAUTY AND STILLNESS

(In the ruined Greek Theatre, Taormina, Sicily)

How still it is! Between me and the sea,
Between me and far Etna's snowy slope,
The midges in the sunlight idly move,
As if they had of life but drowsy hope.
No cock crows, not a bird or wind is singing
About this eaglet town whose eyrie hangs
Upon a high cliff; not a bell is ringing
From church or convent tower
The sleepy hour;
And not a voice of afternoon comes bringing
Amid these ruins joy, or griefs that lower.

Thro the rent walls and arches where I lie
 With silent broken columns basking round,
Is framed as radiant a scene as eye
 May hope to dwell on; yet my heart unbound
Is not enthralled — but to the voiceless vision
 Of villa, castle, sky and sea is cold.
And tho their beauties blend, with calm Elysian,
 Since the bright sunlight's fall
 Is over all,
My thoughts blend not, but brood with indecision,
 That seems all aspiration to appall.

And what is it that so can trouble us
 Mid scenes so fair and peaceful? Is it, here,
Times's still destruction striking to the soul
 The certainty that death is ever near?
Once there were plaudits where this silence passes,
 Once there was glory where these ruins reign,
Once Greece and Rome sat thrall'd where now
 the grasses

Alone are audience
Of the intense
Lone tragedy that year on year amasses:
O is fate's power upon us so immense?

Or is it that too-beautiful sometimes
Will make us sad as too-imperfect can?
That the Ideal in full bodiment
But leaves more bleak the wonted life of man?
To Etna, poet of the azure heaven,
King of myth-makers, does this scene belong;
But unto us of lowly mortal leaven,
To us who scarce can hope
For greater scope
On earth than is comprised in seven times seven,
Must not a grandeur less immortal ope?

Ay, and more intimately kin to us!
So from snow-summit and the sapphire sea,
From plain and promontory do I turn,
And distances that dream majestically,

To yon bare ledge of rock, where cactus-pendants
 In homely and grotesque confusion cling,
As to our niches we, who know transcendence
 Of this our little life
 With want so rife,
But makes us, oft, dissatisfied attendants
 Upon dull Toil that soon becomes loathed Strife.

THE CONTESSA TO HER JUDGES

(Palermo)

Do not suppose that I confess
I sinned — I who have killed him!
For did he not go nightly there
To her balcony and sing —
Until she bade him up to her
And in her arms stilled him,
Then sent him back with lies of love
To me — a shameless thing?

Do not suppose that I confess:
Not unto God, the Father,
Sitting, with mercy in His eyes,
And ready to shrive all,

And shrinking not away from me,
But listening to me rather,
Would I say, "I am on sin's flood,
Save me, or I am drowned!"

Ah no . . . For had he that I loved
But said, "I love *her* better;
You are my wife — but Beauty reigns
As mistress of men's soul!"
I would have scorned to spill her cup
Of joy — but would have let her
Clasp it to her and drink of it
Whatever he should dole.

Yes, had he only dealt me fair,
But once, and not pretended,
While I with ready doting still
Gave all of soul or flesh —
To a belief I blush for now,
We might at last have ended

Merely as many have before,
Not in this bloody mesh!

For love has too its Holy Ghost
To sin against, past pardon;
Love too, and I in killing him
Have done no more a wrong
Than Christ will, when He comes again
From Paradise, to harden
His heart against all blasphemy
That surges from Hell's throng.

ON THE UPWARD ROAD

Within a city I paused, in pity
Of human sorrow and human wrong;
Of bitter toiling, of sad assoiling,
Of fatal foiling to weak and strong.

I paused where centred on sin throngs entered
A door of evil and lust and greed.
I saw dark faces whereon disgraces
Had writ their traces for all to read.

I said: *It is human, nor man nor woman
Is worse or better than men before.
Since time's beginning there has been sinning,
While time is spinning there shall be more.*

*For, spite of sages that search the ages
Back to the mammoth and saurian;
That find a growing, an upward flowing
Of Good all-knowing, man is but man.*

*In spite of heavens, in spite of leavens,
Of yeasty yearnings to run and climb,
He is no surer that life is purer,
Or that a Juror sits over time.*

*He takes the seasons, each with its treasons
Of heat or tempest, of sun or snow,
Half doubtful whether a better weather
Would work together with one so low.*

*His gods are many, or one, or any:
He must have worship to hush his fear.
So all the spaces thro which thought races
He fills with Faces that hide — yet hear.*

*Or when death sickens his heart it quickens
His need, so lonely for love's applause,
That of his dreamings — the merest seemings
Of deathless gleamings, he makes him Laws.*

*And with repentance will serve their sentence —
In hopes of gaining again one breast.
The universes that doom disperses
His faith immerses in Life all-blest.*

*He is so little that his acquittal,
Of all great Nature impels him to,
He cries for bravely: yet ever gravely,
Or sad, or suavely, the Skies will woo.*

*But doubts while wooing, so keeps pursuing
Two roads — one starry and one of earth.
Nor ever clearer seems one, or nearer
His goal — or dearer in weal or worth.*

Thus, in a city, impelled by pity
More than despair I paused and cried.
But in my being a deeper seeing,
A truer pleaing to me replied: —

*You speak in passion — in the dark fashion
Of those who suffer because they grope;
To whom despairing seems the true daring
When doubt long-faring no door can ope.*

*For 'tis not certain that sin's dark curtain
Of imperfection hangs still so black;
That man has lifted no edge, or rifted
No fold, or sifted light thro no crack.*

*He stumbles ever, in his endeavour,
And seems no better than he has been.
But life is vaster and he more master
Now, if no faster he sinks in sin.*

*And, too, his duty is not mere beauty
Of moral being, he is a Child
Of higher station, of all creation —
Whose aspiration runs thro him wild.*

*A thousand courses on him life forces,
A thousand visions that bring a need
To search abysses for all he misses:
From all he wisses to frame his creed.*

*So all the wages that thro the ages
He, Nature's vassal, with toil has won,
All secrets looted, all lies refuted
Must be computed as good well done.*

*Praise then be to him that strongly thro him
There flows the effort to find his goal,
That faith defeated — by false gods cheated,
And oft unseated, still rules his soul.*

CHARTINGS

There is no moon, only the sea and stars;
 There is no land, only the vessel's bow
 On which I stand alone and wonder how
Men ever dream of ports beyond the bars
 Of Finitude that fix the Here and Now.
A meteor falls, and foam beneath me breaks;
 The phosphor fires within it faintly die.
 So soft the sea is that it seems a sky
On which eternity to life awakes.

The universe is spread before my face,
 Worlds where perchance a million seas like this
 Are flowing and where tides of pain and bliss
Find, as on earth, so prevalent a place
 That nothing of their wont we there should miss.

The Universe, that man has dared to say
Is but one Being --- ah, courageous thought!
Which is so vast that hope itself is fraught
With shame, while saying it, and shrinks away.

Shrinks, even as now! For clouds sweep up the skies
And darken the wide waters circling round,
From out whose deep arises the old sound
Of Terror unto which no tongue replies
But Faith — that nothing ever shall confound.
Not only pagan Perseus but the Cross
Is shrouded — with wild wind and wilder rain,
That on me beat until my soul again
Sings unsundering to fears of Loss.

For this I know, — yea, tho all else lie hid
Uncharted on the waters of our fate,
All lands of Whence or Whither, whose estate
In vain imagination seeks to thrid,
Yet cannot, for the fog within Death's gate —

This thing I know, that life, whate'er its Source
Or Destiny, comes with an upward urge,
And that we cannot thwart its mighty surge,
But with a joy in strife must keep the course.

THE FOUR ENCHANTMENTS

(Of Japan)

There is a land I know, where four enchantments
 ever
Enfold the heart with beauty — and strangeness
 from afar,
And fashion all its hours of unhappiest endeavour
Into forgotten failure; and these four enchant-
 ments are: —

Ever the sound of water, of rain or rushing river;
Ever the wraith of mist, walking the mountain side;
And the pines it passes, black; and the temple bells
 that shiver
The deep grey solemn silence in whose soul the gods
 abide.

THE GOD OF EASE

(As a prodigal sees him)

A temple, now, I know in Yokohama,
With carven dragons climbing to the eaves,
The god of it the heathen call Gautama,
He's fat and calm, and large of feet and sleeves.
The faithful come and clang a gong before him,
And clap and fling a copper on the floor,
And paper lantern shadows swinging o'er him
Lull lazy longings in me to the core.

I don't know who Gautama is; they tell me
He wasn't born a busy Japanee,
But likely was a Hindu, and they spell me
His other name that sounds like Shak-mou-nee.

But he's the god for me — the jolly idol
Of all that sit so smug about the East,
For in him there's a smiling that can sidle
Right into me and quiet there the beast.

And that now's what I like — so Yokohama
Shall be my berth — tho I may come to beg
Like any yellow-footed holy lama
A bowl of rice to keep me on a leg.
But if I do — in rags and dirt, and shameless —
I'll go at night to see that lantern swing;
And doubtless I may die forsook and nameless;
But then, such worship is the only thing!

For he's the god — Gautama in his shrine there,
To make you see no heav'n is reached by work,
To make you like a heathen go and twine there
A paper prayer, and feel you never shirk.
The priests discovered that and I have learned it,
I sit and watch the saggy moon go o'er,
And "peace," I say, and "ease," and I have earned it!
So add my soul, Gautama, to your store!

BY THE CH'EN GATE

At dusk as wild geese winged their aery way
 Upon the sunset over proud Peking,
To where, darker than jade, the mountains lay,
Set in the misty gold of dying day,
I stood upon the mighty Tartar wall
 By the great-towered gate, the Ch'en, and felt
 The yellow myriads move to it and melt,
 As in some opiate sleep's imagining.
And slowly thro there came a caravan
 Of swinging camels out of far Thibet,
 Upon their tawny flanks the foam still wet
And in their eyes the desert's ancient span.
 What dreams they bore to me I now forget,
But thro me rang the name of Kubla Khan.

A SONG FOR HEALING

(On the South Seas)

When I return to the world again,
The world of fret and fight,
To grapple with godless things and men,
And battle, wrong or right,
I will remember this — the sea,
And the white stars hanging high,
And the vessel's bow
Where calmly now
I gaze to the boundless sky.

When I am deaf with the din of strife,
And blind amid despair,
When I am choked with the dust of life
And long for free soul-air,

I will recall this sound — the sea's
And the wide horizon's hope,
And the wind that blows
And the phosphor snows
That fall as the cleft waves ope.

When I am beaten — when I fall
On the bed of black defeat,
When I have hungered, and in gall
Have got but shame to eat,
I will remember this — the sea,
And its tide as soft as sleep,
And the clear night sky
That heals for aye
All who will trust its Deep.

THE GREAT WALL

(China, 1912)

I

Dead Dragon of an empire dead and gone,
Whose tail within the sea at Shan-hai-quan
Is lashed to pieces, brick and mortised stone;
Dead monster lying now in all thy folds
Of vast futility, till crumbling moulds
Each scaly parapet and watch-tower claw
That clutches still up at the sky like bone
Whose strength is spent, leaving decay alone, —
Thou art the mummy of tyrannic Law.

II

A hundred score of seasons was thy length
Stretched over mountain spines with crawling
 strength
To keep the dread barbarian aback;
A hundred score of mailed and guarded miles
It ruthlessly was reared thro dark defiles
And chasms, which to span cost untold lives
And filled a million tombs along its track:
For despotry begot thee with its rack —
And with it such dark issue still contrives.

III

Wherefore decay and death unto this land
Have come, as unto thee, O Serpent spanned
Across the past so vastly yet so vain!
In helpless antiquation now it lies,
While vulture nations gather on the skies

To feed upon its huge dismemberment.
For, seeing only easy-gotten gain,
Heartless to its desire for new birth's pain,
They hang above it, with their black intent.

IV

And what shall be the end, O Dragon-Snake,
Past symbol of thy people? Shall they wake?
Shall civilization's arteries, that seek
To pour into their veins renewing dower,
Make them to feel their many-millioned power
And rise in wrath from lethargy to war?
If it shall be, then woe to many a beak
That plucks now at thy loins by peace made weak:
Their depredations then they shall abhor.

WAIKIKI BEACH

(Honolulu)

Waft me away, O sunny winds,
Or let me live beside it,
Lying upon the lulling sands,
Under the high palm shade,
Watching the great white comber cream,
And the brown surf-boats that ride it
And Diamond Head that towers o'er,
In azure skies arrayed.

Waft me at once away! too strong
The spell will be to-morrow;
Stronger than spirit will the sense
Of tropic sweetness sink.
And of the lotos I shall eat
Till far away fades sorrow,

While of the flower-laden light
Thro endless years I drink.

Waft me away, away! O let
The night and moon not find me,
Or stars that hang like golden dates
High upon heaven's tree.
For if the day can so beguile
How will the dusk not bind me?
Never could other days and nights
My yearnings reconcile.

Waft me away, O swift away,
Past reef and bar and harbor.
Deck me not in the scarlet *lei*,
To drowse me ever more.
Say not again *Aloha*, but
Farewell, O fairest arbor
That ever the sun and cloud and sea
Reared on a magic shore.

O-TSUYA FORSAKEN

(She tells of following her lover to find him faithless)

My geta clacked. A paper lantern moved, led by a hand, before me. The wind moaned. A wet pine struck my face. It seemed as if I heard the river rushing o'er me.

I followed. In the tea-house geisha danced *The Death of Spring*. Their shadows fell like petals on the shoji. . . . I felt a creeping mist about me cling.

The bridge was darkly arched. Midway the lantern waited. Pale as the hidden moon the hand was! . . . his! . . . She came! . . . Will the gods ever know how much I hated!

They went . . . up thro the torii, by a shrine. Upon the lantern *Ámida* I read. . . .
No more shall Amida be god of mine!

It is not far to the river — down to death. The stars swirled — a conflagration. . . . And yet I could not go. — Shall he be mine in no reincarnation?

A CHANT AT CHION-IN TEMPLE

(*Kyoto*)

All day long on the mokugno
The young priest beats, chanting.
The incense fumes float to and fro,
As from his lips the sutras flow,
The altar lights burn pale and low,
In the temple dimness panting.

All day long in the pines without
The sêmi seem repeating
His sutra-penance round about
Green tombs of those whom not the shout
Of the great bell hanging o'er can rout
From silence, with its beating.

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

All day long, and the Buddha hears,
Or seems to hear, far inward,
The white-clad pilgrim who appears
Upon his way, thro holy years,
To all the shrines that faith endears,
Till no more tempted sinward.

All day long, and the moon comes gold
Above gray-roofed Kyoto.
And then behind a near-by fold
Of shoji shutting out the cold
A shadow falls and as of old
Is heard the tinkling koto.

Slow tinkling, till, as from its strings
Is poured a girl's heart-haunting,
The young priest swept from Buddha-things
And all that penance-chanting brings
Is lost in love's imaginings,
Its sweet eternal wanting.

KOREAN

With gourd o'ergrown the village thatches
Cluster under the mountain side,
Like mushrooms that the bright sun matches
With the brown soil afar and wide.

White-clad the peasant ploughs or wanders
Idly or flecks an easy flail,
While at her task the woman ponders
Thoughts that are empty as her pail.

No temple-top, no dream, no vision
In any face or shapely thing.
Here there is seen life's sad elision
From the Illimitable's well-spring.

Only the rice to grow — sad duty;

Only the rice to eat and store.

These are divinity and beauty,

Nor is there longing after more.

THEOPHILUS

(In his cell on Mount Athos)

Circa A. D. 1450

You hear their blasphemies, O God,
 These helots of Mahomet!
Like glutton dogs are they — that turn
 Again to their own vomit.
For Heaven, say they, is a place
 Of silks and wines and swooning
All day on deep divans, while round
 Are houris, love-lutes tuning.
Bright houris — three-score for the couch
 Of each accurst believer —
And all black-eyed and beautiful —
 The Fiend is their deceiver!

They say this in their pride, O God,
While we dwell on our rock —
Which never woman's foot has trod . . .
Will you still let them mock!

They say that Heaven is a place
Of riches, slaves and pleasure,
Where every soothing thrill of sense
Is lengthened — past all measure —
Till a full age of easesome bliss
Is packed in every second —
Only by lips that kiss and hands
Caressing to be reckoned!
And, in this carnal Paradise,
They say Christ dwells, a prophet —
But lesser than Mahomet is! —
God, is it not but Tophet!
They say this in their scorn of us
Who shut from out our brain
All memory of woman, thus,
Upon hard beds of pain.

So curse them, God, in every land —
 To whom thy Holy Spirit
Is but a wind, with frankincense
 And spices to endear it,
Which blows across their Paradise
 To sweeten the caresses
Of every houri who attends
 Their evil idlenesses.
Curse them with barrenness and send
 Their souls to Hell for ever,
With women's souls just opposite,
 Beyond their want's endeavour.
Then in thy Skies — tho Christ saith clear
 That none sent thither wed —
Let each who shunned all women here
 On one there rest his head!

BASKING

Give me a spot in the sun,
With the lizard basking by me,
In Sicily, over the sea,
Where Winter is sweet as Spring,
Where Etna lifts his plume
Of curling smoke to try me,
But all in vain for I will not climb
His height so ravishing.

Give me a spot in the sun,
So high on a cliff that, under,
Far down, the flecking sails
Like white moths flit the blue;

That over me on a crag
There hangs, O aery wonder,
A white town drowsing in its nest
That cypress-tops peep thro.

Give me a spot in the sun,
With contadini singing,
And a goat-boy at his pipes
And donkey bells heard round
Upon the mountain paths
Where a peasant cart comes swinging
Mid joyous hot invectives — that
So blameless here abound.

Give me a spot in the sun,
In a land whose speech is flowers,
Whose breath is Hybla-sweet,
Whose soul is still a faun's,
Whose limbs the sea enlaps,
Thro long delicious hours,

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

With liquid tenderness and light
Sweet as Elysian dawns.

Give me a spot in the sun
With a view o'er vale and villa,
O'er grottoed isle and sea
To Italy and the Cape
Around whose turning lies
Old heathen-hearted Scylla,
Whom many an ancient sailor prayed
The gods he might escape.

Give me a spot in the sun:
With sly old Pan as lazy
As I, to tempt me flesh and soul
To disbelief and doubt
Of all gods else, from Jove
To Bacchus born wine-crazy.
Give me, I say, this spot in the sun,
And Realms I'll do without!

THE BALLAD OF THE MAID OF
ORLEANS

Many a man of many a race
Has done a deed of shame,
But never a worse than this was done,
O England, in thy name!

The Maid of Orleans lay in her cell,
Fated and hung with fetters,
Ready for burning at the stake,
By men — at war her betters.

But if they burned her would the might
And mystery she wielded
Be, by the flaming death of her,
Once and forever yielded?

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

“By God, it will not!” said a lord
Of Albion, her foe;
A beast, the vision on whose face
Was mixed with patriot glow.

“By God, it will not, for her strength
Lies in a secret thing —
And martyrdom of a virgin maid
Thro all this land would ring.

“But -- give her body a child,” he said,
And looked about him hot.
Thro every man there coldly ran
The serpent of his thought.

“Once give her body a child —” He took
The keys from the warden's hand.
“A maid is a maid, but England's aid
By men was ever planned:

“A maid is a maid — but all the saints
That round about her stir
Shall be as whispering fiends, if once
Love has had toll of her.”

He rose; behind him clanged the door;
It shuddered in their hearts.
He went into her cell, where fear
Pale on her cheek upstarts.

“The Virgin had a child,” he said,
“And you have none, my dear.”
He seized her in his arms: a cry
Rang from her pure and clear.

He seized her in his arms: she fought.
O brutal hand that rested
One moment on her maiden breast
Where only God had nested.

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

O brutal hand, O brutal lips,
O brutal soul that sought
To soil virginity as brave
As Heaven ever wrought!

She beat him from her, bleeding, blind —
She but a maid, a woman!
She beat him off — with chastity
That strove divinely human.

He fell, shaken away — with passion
Burning still in his eye.
“By God, for that one touch,” he said,
“I’d dare, tho I should die.

“And were you but an English wench
And I a king,” he said. . . .
She sank fainting upon the floor,
He deemed that she was dead.

O many a man of many a race
Has done a deed of shame. —
They took her on the morrow out
And burnt her in Christ's name.

INLANDERS

(*Malaya*)

So far away from the sea, O palm, cocoanut palm?
So far away in the jungle with the Tamil alone for
friend?

Do you lift your head so high, to gaze at the dark
night mountains

That hide you from its foam and the cool surf-
wind's low sigh?

So far away from the sea? Alas, so must I dwell,
I who was given a spirit sea-vision alone can sate!
And yet there is still the sky, O palm, and the star-
tides in it,

So let us bide content with our dwellings — you
and I!

INDIA

Strange Pauper among nations, with the rags
Of ancient custom on thy wasted limbs;
Proud blind Faquir, whom life forsaken drags
Along till all desire within thee dims;
Cast from thy neck the chain of skulls that seems
A type to thee of endless death and birth;
Escape from thy vain striving to escape
All that life is of worthlessness or worth.

Go to the ghat of Freedom and plunge in,
Or to the fane of it and cast off Caste.
Then out and cry thy right, with hungry din,
To all earth has, for breaking of thy fast.
Get for thy body food, and then thy soul
Cheated with long denial shall resume
Its daily love of all that lies *between*,
And not *beyond*, birth and the bitter tomb.

THE NEW MOON

(On the Indian Ocean)

Can anything so slender and so frail
As thee, O virgin moon, e'er hope to grow
Into the rounded glory that we know
A little hence shall fill the world with glow?

To Jupiter and Venus in rose skies
Above thee wedded, thou dost only seem
A slim bridemaiden casting a shy gleam
Upon the nuptial splendour of their dream.

Or as a Hindu girl shrinking away
In argent innocence from rites so tense
With passion as to quicken all thy sense
Too soon with longing's lovely exigence.

So with a blushing veil of cloud to cloak
Thy naked modesty, how fair the glide
Of thy young body is adown the wide
Diwan of sunset towering o'er the tide!

How fair! till in a dark sky-chamber hid
Thy sweet shape yields to thoughts I will not thrid.

THE SHAH TO HIS DEAD SLAVE

I look, Laili, for the star we loved
So many moons ago,
Upon this sea
Of Araby,
Where stars love most to glow.
I find it not, for Allah has
So many stars, that part
May well be lost
Or from Him tossed,
As you were from my heart.

And yet I know that it is there,
I feel its spirit light,
As I feel you,
O child of dew,

Slain by my jealous might!
'Tis there, yet never shall I see
Its face again, or find,
Even when death
Has drained my breath,
Your arms about me twined!

A PARABLE OF PAIN

My eyes were weary, heavy and red,
Pain in my breast had made her bed,
Instead of Beauty that I had wed.

I said, "Dark concubine of man,
Giving him child when none else can,
When will he take from thee the ban?

When will he hold thee to his heart,
Sad Hagar, cast from him apart,
And know thee for the mate thou art?

What if thy seed be Ishmael —
And not the other loved too well?
Is it less worthy? can he tell?

What if he casts thee and thy child
Away from him into the wild
Of things sore hated and defiled?

Equal with Beauty in his house
Thou still shalt be to sting and rouse.
He shall not wholly break his vows;

But oft shall welcome thee, thro time,
Back to his heart, and from the chime
Of thy lone lips learn things sublime.”

EROSTRATUS

(A fable for all critics)

Hear the tale of Erostratus,
Born in the city of Ephesus —
Tho, forsooth, there is none of us
Needs the moral of it!
For what one of us cares for fame
Till his caring is turned to flame
Ready to burn, without a shame,
Fairest shrines to win it?
Ready to shatter or destroy
Beauty that is the world's best joy,
Art that is pure of all alloy?
Who of us has done it?

Hear the tale of Erostratus,
Haunting the streets of Ephesus,
Hungering ever thus and thus

For renown to take him.

Craving to be upon men's lips —
Mark of their pointing finger-tips,
Till he says — as the passion grips

And the madness moves him —
“Since Diana is praised by all,
Down the temple of her shall fall!
And the builder shall feel each wall
Battering in upon him!”

“Yea,” saith he, with his heart a-craze,
“Unto fame there are many ways;
Who cannot build — then, let him raze,
Thus to be immortal!”

Slips he then thro the temple door:
Soon swift tongues of flame outpour:
He it is that has made them roar:
Matchless is his chortle!

For a name does he leave men thus. . . .

But the moral is not for us

Who would doubtless Erostratus

Damn, to scrub hell's portal.

ALEEN

The long line of the foaming coast
Is muffled by the fog's gray ghost.
I cross the league of sea between
And lift the latch and kiss Aleen.

She throws a log upon the fire.
I draw her to me nigh and nigher.
She does not know what a brief time
Ago it was my arms held — Crime.

The surf is beating on the shore.
We hear our own heart-beatings more.
She speaks of *him* and my reply
Is silence: does she wonder why?

“I do not love him: have no fear,”
Her whisper is, against my ear.
At last, “I have no fear,” say I.
She starts, as at a wild-beast's cry.

And then she sees red on my coat.
A still-born cry throbs in her throat.
The fog sweeps by the window pane
Her sight is fixed on one dull stain.

I rise and light my pipe and go,
Leaving her standing, staring so.
The wind means storm, I think, to-night:
'Twill not be that which makes her white.

And yet had it been yesterday
She said those words, I still could pray.
There would be still a God above —
As proof of Whom there is but love.

THE STRIVER

When I struggle, with human hands,
 The hands of God betray me.
When I cry, "I will win or die!"
 His silences dismay me.
Yet, when a victim, low I lie,
 His victor-wreaths array me.

For I have held but one defeat
 Final and faith-abjuring;
Held — when strife at its worst was rife —
 But *this* thing past the curing;
Failure to see how surely life
 Grows great with great enduring.

MYSTERIES

I

MOONLIGHT

Since man became man
Moonlight on the sea
Ne'er rippled and ran
But sadly gazed he.

Till man is no more
Moonlight on the wave
Shall lead his thought o'er
From life to the grave.

II

THE SHADOW

On the dim shoji of the universe
The Shadow falls
Of One who dwells within so vague and vast
His Shape appalls.

We stand and view it, lonely in the dark,
But scarce it comes
Ere doubt lest it may be but Maya-dreams
Our sight benumbs.

III

SUDDEN SIGHT

“There is no land,” I said, “in all the world,
Only this glassy sea!”

Then lo, on the horizon hung unfurled
As fair a shore as any Spring sets free.

“God is there none,” I cried, “but only space,
Star-built and without Soul!”

Then lo I looked and all infinity
No more was space, but God who is its Whole.

IV

NON SUFFICIT

Cover it over with lilies,
And cover it with green,
Yet I know that the awful black
Of the coffin lies between.

Cover my heart with kindness,
With comfort-words and grace,
Still it will be a sepulchre
For her remembered face.

V

SIC CUM NOBIS

They who are wise in Nature's mysteries
Tell us the pearl is but a prison cell
Built by the oyster round a preying worm
That creeps, a parasite, into its shell.

So is it with all beauty that we build:
The worm of longing preys upon our heart
Till with fair word or form or music spell
We hush it in imperishable Art.

VI

BIRD-BLISS

There is no mountain, here, or sea,
Yet do I feel infinity,
For there in the top of a tulip-tree
A wild wild bird is singing to me!

AT THE WORLD'S HEART

And full is his throat, at every note,
Of God — until my heart's afloat
In joy — like every leaf unfurled
By May, the sweetheart of the world.

VII

MAN AND BIRD

(At sea)

Thro the deep rifts of dark Atlantic cloud
The moonlight breaks and kindles magic foam,
On which to-night the petrel peacefully
Will make his watery nest — a heaving home.

Within his sea-born dreams will there be one
Of me who watched him in our seething wake
Long hours to-day? and when dawn brings the sun
Will he fare lonelier for my vanished sake?

THE ATHEIST

Over a scurf of rocks the tide
Wanders inward far and wide,
Lifting the sea-weed's sloven hair,
Filling the pools and foaming there,
Sighing, sighing everywhere.

Merged are the marshes, merged the sands,
Save the dunes with pine-tree hands
Stretching upward toward the sky
Where the sun, their god, moves high:
Would I too had a god — e'en I!

For the sea is to me but sea,
And the sky but infinity.
Tides and times are but some chance
Born of a primal atom-dance.
All is a mesh of Circumstance.

In it there is no Heart — no Soul —
No illimitable Goal —
Only wild happenings that wont
Makes into laws no might can shunt
From the deep grooves in which they hunt.

Wings of the gull I watch or claws
Of the cold crab whose strangeness awes:
Faces of men that feel the force
Of a hid thing they call life's course:
It is their hoping or remorse.

Yet it may be that I have missed
Something that only they who tryst,
Not with the sequence of events
But with their viewless Immanence,
Find and acclaim with spirit-sense.

JUDGMENT

Men may say of God
Everything but this,
That He is guilty of our pain
To bring Him bliss.

God may say of men
Everything but one,
That we are penal in His sight
When all is done.

Each may say of life
Everything — and still
Know that its primal blot came not
Thro any will.

A MARINER'S MEMORY

An irised coral-reef,
A lonely wreck upon it,
Scuttled by pirate hands,
Washed over by the tide.
The blue sea-spaces round,
Deep in the sunlight drowned,
And in a calm profound, —
These and no more beside.

No more, but how they haunt me!
For still, awake or sleeping,
Sudden in trance I see
The reef . . . the sky sun-pale.
And then, as when marooned
So long there I had swooned,
I wake with mind untuned,
And cry "A sail! a sail!"

UNDER THE SKY

Far out to sea go the fishing junks,
 With all sails set,
The tide swings gray and the clouds sway,
 The wind blows wet;
Blows wet from the long coast lying dim
 As if mist-born.
Far out they sail, as the stars pale,
 The stars of morn.

Far out to sea go the fishing junks,
 And I who pass
Upon a deck that is vaster reck
 No more, alas,
Of all their life, or they of mine,
 Than comes to this, —
That under the sky we live and die,
 Like all that is.

LOSSES .

To lose the voice of the sea,
And hear only its roar,
To feel infinity
Foam thro it never more,
To learn that time means death
And not eternity —
Is but to draw no free and fearless breath.

To watch the slow sun set
And, in the roseate pause,
No more with wan regret
Desire what never was;
To find that love, grown pale,
Can all its faith forget, —
Is but in life's finalities to fail.

THE PROFLIGATE

Peace! I must go,
Tho you are all to me,
Comrade and friend,
Mistress and wife.
Ask me not why —
It is life's call to me —
Staying I die.

Faithless I am:
Faithful could never be.
Mating with you
Should have brought rest.
So I believed:
But — as 'twill ever be —
I was deceived.

Lure of the blood,
Whim of perversity,
Harries me on —
Want of the new;
Craving to clasp
Tho thro adversity
Some one not you.

Craving for sin,
Craving for punishment —
Even for pain,
Stinging and wild.
Craving to be,
Spite of admonishment,
Madly defiled.

Madly yet free —
Tho you are beautiful:
None to compare
With you I'll find! —

Free to rove on,
Basely, undutiful,
Cruel, unkind.

For I am thus.
Nothing for long to me
Ever can seem
Clear of distaste.
Fairest of lips,
If they belong to me,
Soon become waste.

Too many wants
God has put into me,
Noble and vile,
Human, divine.
So till life ends
It shall bring sin to me —
And husks for swine.

SOUTH SEAS

Softly the ship pushes
Over the wide night ocean,
Soft her bell rings,
The mast-light gleams aloft.
The helmsman at his task
Steadies her keel's motion.
On she sails and on,
Soft she sails and soft.

Planet and constellation
Climb up her shrouds ever,
And keep watch after watch
Above her, calm, withdrawn.
She seems, like all that is,
Absolved from all endeavour.
Soft she sails and soft,
On she sails and on.

CHRIST OR MAHOMET

We came to the Cape as the sun was setting —
unto Cape Guardafui,
Somaliland's unending sand lay desert dark behind.
The crescent moon that is Allah's boon and the
Prophet's sign was fretting
To silvery foam a few thin clouds its beauty had
entwined.

We came to the Cape and a star of passion, such as
the Magi followed,
Hung over it, and the Infinite to star and crescent
seemed
To murmur: “ ‘Allah’ and ‘Christ’ are names, but
empty names ye fashion:
I am the Nameless—warring creeds are lies, but
lies ye've dreamed.”

TO STROMBOLI

How beautiful from the sea,
How beautiful and holy
You rise, as if you were a peak
Of the gods, engirt with moly!
And yet your lava veins but let
One little village live
Beneath the terror of your brow
Where darkly smoke is drifting, now,
Down to its villas lowly.

How beautiful from the sea,
Where high the gulls o'erwander
As if upon the strange deep fires
Asleep in you to ponder.

And all the isles about you gaze
Toward your height — or far
To where Sicilia's heart of flame
Spells on the sky the Titan's name,
Above great Etna yonder.

How beautiful, how vast,
How linked in ways past knowing
To that third fate, Vesuvius,
From out whose throat comes flowing,
As out of yours, O arbitress
Of lands that laugh secure,
Death's word, when for the Three you choose
To say what myriads life shall lose —
In awful anguish going.

IN A GREEK TEMPLE

(During the Balkan War, 1912)

Between the sea and the mountains,
Under the open sky,
Blue as of old, O Greeks, when you
Went forth to bleed and die,
It stands, superbly columned,
With architrave and frieze
That crumble yet speak gloriously
Of immortalities.

And while to-day there is ringing
Over the busy world
News of a war which now not Zeus,
But a New God has hurled,

While cries that Mitylene
Is taken come again,
I gaze upon this shrine you reared
And think how you were men!

Men by the might of beauty,
Men by the might of sword,
Men with the heart and soul to ken
Such joys as gods uphoard.
Men who could see the perfect
That is not taught by pain.
O Life, fill up again your cup
For such a race to drain!

THE HIDDEN FOE

There is a foe,
Secret and certain,
Who hides behind
Life's every curtain;

Behind each quest
And each achieving,
Behind all beauty,
All believing.

And ever ready
Is he to thrust
His skull-face thro
And make all dust.

So who would hallow
Time's slipping sod,
Who still would hearten
The world with God,

Must shut this foe
From all intrusion;
This foe, who is—
Cold Disillusion.

TELEPATHY

(He, alone, by the sea)

What has become of little Annette?
Her other name I now forget.
The sea recalls her strangely yet.

What has become of her brown hair
And body slender pure and fair,
Given to me without a prayer?

What has become of her? That night
I took her all — and loved her quite.
Parting I left her strangely white.

(She, on the streets)

What has become of him — the first
To ask of me what now the worst
May have for any coin accurst?

What has become of him: my name
Could he recall if that night came?
Would he believe who wrought my shame?

Christ, it was love of him! — I thought
That with my body I had bought
Bliss for me ever in his thought.

THE EXPLORERS

(Captain Scott and his comrades)

A snow-cairn is their grave,
Far in the frozen South.
A cross of skis above it,
With Christ alone to love it.
A snow-cairn is their grave,
And never priestly mouth
Shall bring it prayer — or holy care,
But only wind — the bitter wind
And God shall visit there.

And see, under the pall —
Under the snowy stole —
Heroic faces whiling
Eternity with smiling.

For so they lie — and all

The white peace of the Pole

Shall wrap them deep within its sleep

Till death no more, wintering o'er,

His hoary watch shall keep.

TO A BOY

(Seen with his mother in a Café)

That is your mother, boy?

The woman with wanton eyes
And losel lips, whose laughter slips
Passion into men's finger-tips,
Till they would clasp her as she sips
Her wine there, Circe-wise?

That is your mother? she,

Who makes of love a disgrace?
And of desire a shameful fire
To burn in the blood and never tire —
Till it is quenched for the old hire
That women ever face?

That is your mother? Ah!

And you, do you understand?
So little you are, a scant thirteen,
Have you heard of Helen and Egypt's queen,
And, guessing at what such glances mean,
Are seared, as with a brand?

Why then, away . . . and weep! . . .

Yet O, that eyes should shed
Such tears, such piteous tears, as those
That start from the heart of a child who knows
The breast that has nursed him can enclose
Unchastities so dread.

PAGANS

I could not pray if I would to-day,
For all the world is given to me
In one great joy of wind and June,
Heaven and earth and heart in tune.
I could not pray, and if God be
Other than here I feel and see,
Naught proves it, so my bliss is full
And wanting is unbelievable.

So up the hills, to the hill-tops,
I go to see where the world stops,
The world that leads my eyes on
To the rim of the green horizon.
O up the hills where white and dim
And hazily far the clouds swim

Upon the leafy marge whence leaps
The mind, out into azure deeps —
Out into vast infinity,
As a diver into the sea!

For not a valley to-day could hold
My heart shod for the heights!
The daisies ringed me around with gold —
But I escaped their fairy fold
And followed the path with a backward laugh
Up, where the hawk alights,
On the topmost bough touching the brow
Of the bending blue where dreams come true,
If the dreamer enough delights!
Or if he will listen, wait, and gaze,
Till the wind on him, chanting, lays
The spell of its aery might!

And high I sit — as infinite
As the universe that streams

Mysteriously and magically
And joyous thro my dreams.
So why should I pray if I would to-day,
Since all the world is given to me
In one great joy of early June —
God himself thro the whole a-swoon,
As pagan as are we!

ARGOSIES

Dim thoughts are flitting o'er my heart

Like sails over the sea.

I know not on what wind they come

Or to what quest they flee.

I only know they leave behind

A void of mystery.

I watch them setting phantom forth,

I see them catch the breeze.

They are like winged things whose ports

Are God's eternities.

Ere Birth I know them — and past Death

Shall sight them, on new seas.

TO THE YOUNGER GENERATION

We have taught you bridle and saddle;
We have given you room to run;
Your steeds are bred
Of a hope high-fed
That we of our fathers won.
To us there are still the stirrups
Of days that we have known,
But soon you will ride,
Side by our side,
Bidding us hold our own.

The reins of the world you will grapple
Out of our curbing hands.
You will change our goal,
And Time, as a foal,

Will guide with new commands.
For so we did in our season,
And so your sons shall do,
Wherefore we pray,
As you break away,
But this: ride Vision-true.

For not in the New lies peril:
We fear no youngest dream
That ever was
Of Utopias
Wrapped in supernal gleam.
But know, there is goalless running,
A spurring, but for speed,
With an intense
Low love of sense
Blind to the world's soul-need.

Mount then a reproachless saddle,
We have given you room to run.

Your steeds are bred
Of a hope high-fed;
So see, ere the race be done,
That you yield the reins to your children
More near to the final goal.
And if we cry
As you pass us by,
Heed not — but achieve the Whole.

THE IMMORTAL LURE

FIRST PUBLISHED 1911

—INFINITE PASSION AND PAIN
OF FINITE HEARTS THAT YEARN

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GIORGIONE

CHARACTERS

- VISHWAMYA *A Renowned Ascetic*
RISHYAS *His Son, a Young Saint*
SUNANDI *An Old Woman of the Court of the*
Rajah of Anga
KOIL *A Young Girl of the Court*

GIORGIONE

SCENE: *A work-room of GIORGIONE on the edge of the Lagoon in which lie the Campo Santo and Murano. It is littered with brushes, canvases, casts, etc., and its walls are frescoed indiscriminately with saints and bacchantes, satyrs and Madonnas, on backgrounds religious or woodland. A door is on the right back; and foliate Gothic windows, in the rear, reveal the magic water with its gliding gondolas. On a support toward the centre of the room is a picture — covered, and not far from it, a couch.*

Late Afternoon.

GIORGIONE, *who has been sitting anguished on the couch, rises with determined bitterness. As he does so, BELLINI enters anxiously.*

Bellini. Giorgione!

Giorgione (turning). It is you?

Bellini. Your word came to me,
In San Lazzario where I labored late,
And shakes my troubled heart. You will not do this!

Giorgione. Yes!

Bellini. How, my son! her picture! as
a wanton's!

Giorgione. Tho it has been till now my adoration!
The fairest of my dreams and the most holy!
Yes, by the virtue of all honest women,
If such there be in Venice,
I swear it shall be borne by ribald hands
Thro the very streets.

Bellini. My son!

Giorgione. A public thing!

[*Points to picture.*]

Fit for the most lascivious! who now
Shall gaze on what I had beheld alone,
On what was purer to me than the Virgin!
The very pimps and panders of the Piazza

Shall if they will whet appetite upon it,
And smack their losel lips.

Bellini. And to what end?

Giorgione. Her shame!

Bellini. The deeds of wounded pride
and love

Work not so, but fall back upon the doer —
Or on some other.

Giorgione. I care not!

Bellini. Nor have,
Ever, to heed me! as that Aretino,
Who turns your praise to Titian, has told.
For your wild will runs ever without curb,
And I who reared you, as my very own,
Must pay the fall.

Giorgione. No!

Bellini. And the piety
I would have won you to in the past days
Is wasted. The Madonnas
I painted with a heart inspired of Heaven
You paint with pride.

Giorgione. But with all gratitude!
 Ah yes, believe me,
 And with a rich remembrance!
 For scarce oblivion could wipe from me
 How as a wasted lad I came to Venice —
 A miserable, patched and pallid waif,
 With but an eye to see and hand to shape!
 You took me from the streets and taught me all
 The old can teach the young, until my name
 Is high in Venice —
 Linked with that of Beauty:—
 “Giorgione! our Giorgione!” do they cry
 On the canals, the very gondoliers.
 And in a little while it should have glowed
 Immortal on the breast of Italy,
 As does Apelles on the page of Greece,
 For I was half-divine, until ——

Bellini.

Until

A girl whom you had fixed your heart upon
 With boundless folly, you who should have
 lived

With but one passion — that of brain and brush —
Until she ——

Giorgione. Say it!

Bellini. This Isotta ——

Giorgione. Ai!

Whom I had chosen o'er a hundred others
To soar with!
To soar and then in wedded peace to prize!
This false Isotta
Whom in poverty
I found, as you found me, and loved to madness.
This fair Isotta
Whom I would have made
All Venice to be a halo for — as were
Cities of old for queens of sceptred love:
Until she leaves, departs, forsakes me, goes
Away, worthless away, from my true arms,
With Luzzi, a lank boy.

Bellini. So. And most strange.

Giorgione. No, nothing a woman does is ever
strange!

Will they not cloak a lie in innocence,
A treachery in veiling soft caresses —
Tho to the Mass unceasingly they fare
And say like her their aves night and noon?
Have they a want that wantons not with guile,
A tear that is not turgid with deceit?
Are not their passions blown by every wind?
Have they not all the straying heart of Helen?
Then why must I,
Who had in me a hope
That rivalled Raphael's or Leonardo's,
Keep, cozened so, that I contemn her shame?

Bellini. Because she is a woman — whom you
tempted,

Tho with all trust to wed her — and you know not
Whether her going was of shamelessness.

Giorgione (laughing bitterly). Or whether she
may not yet return, today,
And with a heart that is a nymph's, a soul
That is a nun's,
Beguile me back to doting?

Whether she may not —
 With that body God
 Might once, deceived, have moulded angels after —?
 Then flaunt her thralling of me to the world,
 Whose ready lips should laugh where'er we went
 And whisper, "Isotta, there! Giorgione's mis-
 tress!

Who makes a mocking of him?"

Bellini.

Never! never!

Only your unrelenting brain would think it.
 For this I know of her, that tho she has
 Deserted you for what must seem to be
 Only a new-found passion —
 Yet is she womanly, and did you give her,
 As now you mean, to avid lusting eyes,
 Life would be smitten from her.

Giorgione.

As it should!

Bellini. And then from you, repentant of her
 fate?

No, no, my son, I have not seen you rise,
 A planet from the sea, the world's first painter,

To set in this:

You owe my fathering more.

And listen, I have brought to you a way
Of laurels for forgetting. I have come
With a commission from the Signoria,

[Takes it from his breast.

Which names you the chief glory of this city
And votes you proud permission to adorn
San Marco's highest altar with perfection.

Giorgione. And which I spurn, an insult in its
pity!

[Flings it from him.

As they shall learn — these silk and velvet Signors,
Whose condescending ducats buy the dreams
Of the immortal!

Or no! . . . I meant not that — to wound
a kindness.

Bellini. Your ways have ever been the ways of
wounding.

Giorgione. And to the end must be. (*Brokenly*)
For now my hand

Is palsied! I can never paint again.

Colour and shaping light turn in my soul

To chaos and to blindness — to despair!

The brush I lift, to sterile pain more loth!

I yearn and impotence alone arises.

That picture has dried beauty's vein within me

And left me . . . Ah! . . . She shall

atone it! (*calls*) Gigia!

Shameless she is and shall be seen it! — Gigia! —

[*Bitterly.*

Aretino, who is the tongue of lewdness,

And Titian, who trips to it, may gloat,

[GIGIA *hobbles in.*

But they —

Bellini. Giorgione! you have sent for them?

Giorgione (to GIGIA). Whoever seeks my door
is bidden — all!

Gigia. Yes, Messer Giorgio.

Giorgione (as she delays). Go.

Gigia. Before I speak?

Giorgione. Of what?

Gigia. How can I tell you, if I may
Not speak? And you should hear. . . (*Cross-
ing herself*) It is the plague.

A whisper is about

That it has broken out at last in Venice.

[GIORGIONE *staring at her, trembles and seems
slowly stricken — while his eyes fill as
with some evil irrecoverable remembrance.*

Bellini (*fearing for him*). Giorgione!

Giorgione. Oh! . . . and yet . . .
nothing . . . a dream

That came to me last night — as if from death.

Bellini. Then, O my son, it is a premonition,
A pall against this purpose! that you may
Not let these ribald two —
Aretino, this poet and depraver,
And Titian snared within his pagan senses,
Enter and gaze upon. . . O boy, you will
not!

Despoil the picture,
Scatter it to the seas,

And vow never again to paint another,
 Tho that would break my heart, but promise me——

[*A knocking interrupts, and a voice without calls
 lustily:*

Voice: The gods of paint and passion ever gird
 us!

Where's Messer Giorgione? Ho! Ho, ho!

[*GIGIA hurries out.*

Giorgione (after a pause, calling). Aretino!

Aretino. Ai, light of ladies' eyes!

And with him a better! Shall we sing for entrance?

(*Begins*) — A wench I had,

But where is she —?

A-ho!

Old Gigia, is it? Then we come apace,

[*Enters leeringly with TITIAN.*

Like satyrs to the piping of Adonis!

[*With irony.*

A health to you, O heaven-born of Venice!

[*To BELLINI.*

And to you, glorious dauber of Madonnas!
 But, bah! the smell of melancholy! Come,
 What is it? The tale is out about the maid?
 And therefore tears?

[Laughs.

Well, by the lids of Venus, Giorgio,
 It serves you well — or Eve was not a woman!
 There were too many ripe for your assay.
 Why, I believe that every damsel's lips
 On the lagoons were pinched with longing for you!

Titian. Or enough, at least, to send spleen.

Giorgio,

Into my eyes.

Giorgione. They will no more, Titian.

Aretino. In sooth! for since one wench in all the
 world

Prefers another, he will play the monk!
 Since she, the amorous sun-kissed Isotta,
 Had charms too fair for *one* to satisfy!
 And yet — to choose this Luzzi,
 This swaddling acolyte of Innocence,

For her new light-o'-love! to choose him out,
When, for a whiff, she might have had my arms ——

[GIORGIONE *quivers.*

O, Titian, by the gods!

Bellini. *Aretino!* . . .

Giorgione. Stay, let him speak, my master, as
he wills.

Aretino. I say then, Seraph, of your amorosa,
That she deceived me —
That I thought her dreams
Were chaster than the moon, or by my beard,
Which is not born, I should have tricked her senses
Away from you . . . if lies and treachery
And tempting honeyed verses could have done it!
For an Elysium like her warm round body
I never looked upon.

Bellini. *Aretino!*

Giorgione. Peace! he shall speak! for this is
what should be.

Aretino. Ai, Messer Bellini, and your age for-
gets

That he is well consoled with the dear thought
That her first joy was his.

Bellini. Ah! . . .

Aretino. And that vision —!

Why, I have peeped upon her face, no farther.
But to have seen the beauty he has seen,
The Aphrodite-dream of loveliness,
I would have dared virginity's last door.

Giorgione. Then you shall see it.

Bellini. My son!

Giorgione. Yes, tho I die!

Aretino. How, what is this?

Giorgione (*going to picture*). Aretino, Titian —
You are here, tho there is less than love between us:
For, pardon, if I say that you sometimes
Have loathed my triumphs.

Titian. That is so, Giorgione.

But with the brush I yet shall equal them.

Giorgione. You shall surpass them. For my
last is done.

Titian. Come, do you jest?

Giorgione. My last, and it is there!

[Points to picture.

There that you two whose tongues have been so
busy

About the streets with laughing and innuendo,

From ear to ear with jest and utter joy —

You, Titian, a sycophant of Fame,

And you, Aretino, who incarnate lust,

May know that Giorgione is above you.

You coveted Isotta with your eyes,

Now you shall have her as shall all the world!

*[Flings the curtain back from the picture then
sinks to the couch.*

*As they gaze on the unclothed form, BELLINI
turns away, when he sees ISOTTA enter.*

*She is pale and ill, but moves smilingly
down toward GIORGIONE, till happening
to see the picture, she gives a deep cry.*

*GIORGIONE, springing to his feet, dazedly
beholds her.*

Bellini (speechless till he sees ISOTTA'S pallor)

Isotta! you are ill! . . . O would my breath
Had never lasted to this evil hour —!

Shall I not bring the leech? (*when she does not
answer; to GIORGIONE*) This price has pride!

[*He goes: then ARETINO and TITIAN. The
curtain falls back.*

Isotta (*whose eyes have closed*). The flesh of
women is their fate forever!

My poor, poor body! all I had to give
So desecrated.

Giorgione (*hoarsely*). Why have you come here?

Isotta. To see Messer Giorgione — who is brave.

[*Smiles as one shattered.*

To hear Messer Giorgione — who is gentle
And honourable to women who are weak.
To — heal Messer Giorgione — then to die!

Giorgione. Rather to kill!

Isotta. Why, it may be. If love
Still leads me, it were best that it be slain.

Giorgione. The love of a wanton?

Isotta (*slowly*). Who beholds her body

Given . . . to unabated eyes — yet lives?

I think it must be so.

Giorgione. Alluring lies!

Out of pale lips of treachery but lies!

You have returned to me, whom you have cursed

With craving for you,

With an immortal love,

Because this lisping Luzzi,

With whom you fled, weary of falsity,

Has cast you off.

Isotta (gently). Kind Luzzi!

Giorgione. Ah! and blind?

Not knowing that you now are here again,

Where you disrobed to my adoring soul,

But thinking that you wait him with fair eyes

Of fond expectancy — as once for me!

Believing that your breath is beating only

With ecstasy for him!

Isotta. He is — but Luzzi!

Giorgione. And I but Giorgione, smiling quean!

[She turns paler.]

But Giorgione, a vassal to your sway?
 Back to your orgies! and may Venus, goddess
 Of black adulteries, but not of love,
 Be with them! May your blood, that I believed
 Vestal to all but me, run vile with passions
 As any nymph's of Bacchus!
 May your body,
 That I have painted here, be to all time
 An image of soul-cheating chastity!

*[His words have struck her down — and over-
 whelm him.]*

O, I am lost, lost, lost forevermore.

[Falls into a seat.]

Isotta (at length, from the couch, gathering strength).

No, I have come for saving, Giorgione.

Now I can speak — but there is little time,

(Strangely) For Night is coming.

Giorgione (startled to questioning). Isotta?

Isotta.

The still Night,

With Death's dark Gondola to waft me o'er.

[Then as he realizes.]

Nay, stay, stay! leave me not. There is no help.
For it must be. . . A voice Beyond has said it.
And ere I drift out on the darkening ebb ——

Giorgione. Isotta!

Isotta. Peace must be Giorgione's too.

Giorgione. Speak — yet it cannot be — my heart
is dead.

Isotta. Then it shall rise again.— O Giorgione,
My lover once and lord, could you believe,
Even tho I went away from you and with
Another, that unchastity could touch
This body which had been holy to you?

Giorgione. Isotta!

Isotta. It is true that I deceived you,

[With mystic fervor.]

True that I went away from you and wed
Another ——

Giorgione. Ah!

Isotta. And yet it was not Luzzi!

[As he gazes.]

Do you not know? you who so oft have told
 On saintly walls the Magdalen's sad tears?
 Sin, sin had seized me!
 Sin with you to whom
 I gave my body and soul unboundedly.
 We revelled in unwedded ecstasy,
 Laughed in our love over the starred lagoons.
 Sang till the lute was like a thing that lived,
 Danced happy as the fauns and nereids
 That oft you told me of —
 And clasped and kissed,
 O kissed — until I knew that but one way
 Was left to save my soul, Giorgione, one —
 To wed me with the vows and veil to Christ.

[Gazes at a crucifix

Giorgione. Isotta!

Isotta. I am His! I fled to Him!
 The Convent opened its grey arms to take me,
 Santa Cecilia of the Healing Heart,
 And Luzzi kindly led me to its door —
 That you might so be foiled of following.

And with long vigils, fasts and penances
 And prayers I sought oblivion of your face.
 Until this illness strangely fell upon me.

I could not die until you, shriven too

Giorgione. Isotta! My Isotta!

[Falls penitent before her, weeping.

Isotta (her heart eased). Peace, at last.

Giorgione (rising). Ah yes! and I am viler than
 the vilest!

For who remembers not that purity
 Is priceless, ends impoverished of honour.
 And yet . . . there is no wrong irreparable!
 And you must live tho all the angels die —
 Live and be loosed from vows too vainly breathed,
 That wedded we may win again delight!
 Still I am Giorgione, and the sin
 That we have sinned shall be painted away
 With holy pictures

Isotta. Only the dead are holy,
 Or they who die, tho living, to the world.

[Sees the picture.

And eyes have looked upon me —
 Hot eyes that burn my body up with shame.
 Farewell, the tide will cool me, the lone wave
 That washes in from Lido to my grave.

[Looks toward the Campo Santo.

Giorgione. Isotta!

Isotta (fainter). Night, the Night! . . .

Giorgione. O stay! . . .

Isotta (in a fixed vision). It comes,
 The Gondola! (*as if to an unseen Presence*) Row on,
 row on.

[She dies. He sinks beside her stricken and still.

GIGIA enters.

Gigia. Messer Giorgione, one has come to say—

[Sees them, goes near and lifts ISOTTA'S hand.

Then, dropping it with terror.

The plague! the plague! Ah!

Giorgione (rising). Woman, is it true?

[GIGIA flees.

(Mortally moved)

Isotta, this kiss then of all the kisses

That I have slain thee with . . . will God
forgive.

[He kneels and presses his lips fervently to hers.]

CURTAIN

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ARDUIN

CHARACTERS

ARDUIN (*of Provence*) *An Alchemist*
ION *His Nephew*
RHASIS *An Arab, his attendant and assistant*
MYRRHA *A Greek Girl*

ARDUIN

TIME: *The Fifteenth Century.*

PLACE: *Egypt.*

SCENE: *The laboratory of ARDUIN in a house on Nile opposite Cairo. It is a large room on the walls of which mystic figures of the Hermetic philosophy are drawn, together with the zodiac and other astronomical signs; and many strange objects, animal and mineral, are to be seen placed about. In the rear centre is a large sarcophagus. On either side broad window openings reveal the Egyptian night, and one frames the moonlit Sphinx and Pyramids. Toward the right front is a furnace with alembics, retorts, etc.; right and left are doors, and on the left and back another alcove before which hang curtains. Lamps burn.*

RHASIS, who is busy about the furnace, in a troubled manner, lifts a skull and is gazing at it, when ION enters suddenly and stops, pale with purpose.

Ion. Rhasis——

Rhasis (starting and looking round). Young master
Ion! what is this?

[Drops the skull.

Why have you left the city and come here?

Are you aware what hour you have chosen?

Ion. That of his dreams. I learned today: yet
came.

Rhasis. And wherefore?

Ion. To restrain calamity,
Which must await his reasonless belief —
And to regain his love that I have lost.

Rhasis. And have not pondered what calamity
Would fall on you
Who would not learn his Art,
But from its heritage to penury turned,
If here and now he saw you at this hour

When he believes that he shall raise the dead?

Ion. His curse; for he would think me come
to thwart him,

And that I had forgot whatever wrong,
Unexpiated still, my father did him;

[*Looks at sarcophagus.*]

And yet I will not go, for I have purposed —
And you tonight shall help me — (*pauses*)

Rhasis. Unto what?

Ion. Forgiveness of my disobedience —
That may be won from him with Myrrha's face.

Rhasis. Myrrha's!

Ion. Which can alone of earthly
sights,

If what you tell

Of his dead wife be true:

And well you know it is! — He must behold her —
And hear our pleading.

Rhasis. At an hour like this!

Ion. Let her be placed yonder within those
curtains,

While he is mingling here his mysteries,
And when he ——

Rhasis. By the Prophet who is Allah's,

[*Myrrha appears thro door.*

Myrrha! within this chamber! and tonight!
Is there no heed in youth or hesitation,
But only hurrying want! Do you not know
He is without there, at this moment, saying
Unto the seven planets in their spheres,
The seven incantations against death?
And that he ——

Ion. I know only he must see her.

Rhasis. And of all nights in the world, only
tonight!

Myrrha. No, Ion! let us go. I fear this place,
Its strangeness and that still sarcophagus
Appal me.

Ion. And make you forget our love,
And the long bridal-hope of it deferred?

Rhasis. Young master, she does not, in pen-
ury too!

But pleas tonight would ope no nuptial way.
Better than you I know it is not wise.
For ten years is it
I have dwelt with him
While he has sought in vain this great Elixir.
Ten passings of the pilgrims off to Mecca
His wife has lain in that sarcophagus,
Embalmed and waiting, as he thinks, to rise.
And now, this hour, he hopes that it shall be.

Ion. And should it, will he not the more forgive
me?

Or should it not, then seeing Myrrha's face,
Myrrha whom you have said is so much like her,
Will he not ——

Myrrha. Ion, Ion! no! — I fear!
So fond his grief is and unfaceable!
Let us return again unto the city
And to my kindred who will hold us dear.

[*Starting.*

Listen, is it not he? (*Rhasis goes to window*)

Take me away!

Ion. And have him at the breaking of his dream
With none near — and our love's desire be lost?

Myrrha. It will not: let us wait another time!

Ion. Than this when most your face would
deeply move him?

I cannot, and 'twould shame me! for you know
How dear to him

Is his dead wife who lies there, *[Takes her hand.*

And know our severed days!

And shall we bend the knee to cowardice,

Which ever has a premonition ready,

When you who are so like her might tonight——

*[She starts back, for RHASIS, exclaiming,
leaves the window.*

Rhasis. He comes.

Ion. Now?

Rhasis. Go: or take this on
yourselves.

Ion. Upon me be it! Yea, upon me, Myrrha,
For now there is no rest
Until his pardon weds us — and I pay him.

Rhasis. Then but a word remains, young master, more:

To tell you — that I fear — lest thro long toil,
His mind. . . .

Myrrha. Oh! (*recoils*)

Ion. It is not true! . . . No Myrrha! no!

[*Takes her in his arms.*

And is ingratitude I scorn to heed.

[*Turns away.*

Come then and by your beauty's likeness win him.

[*He leads her behind the curtains then goes, door left. A moment, which leaves RHASIS distraught, and ARDUIN enters. He pauses, as if at some presence; then, gazing on the sarcophagus, shudders with hope and comes down.*

Arduin. The night at last when I again shall
clasp her

And banish death to biers beyond the stars!

Rhasis (kneeling). Master!

Arduin. Rise up and never
kneel again!

For from henceforth
I shall be lord of life,
The secret of the phœnix in my hand.

[*Lifts an alembic.*

Gray have I grown in quest of it and old,
Youthless and as a leper to delight,
But it has come at last — at last has come!

[*Sets vessel down.*

Rhasis. And I rejoice, master, for I have toiled
With you these many years — but is it sure?

Arduin. As the moon is in heaven! as the skies!
[*In an ecstasy.*

For last night I beheld
In dreams deeper than day how it must be.
I saw a tomb far-hidden in the earth
And Life within it
Mixing salt and sulphur —
Twin elements
Of the great trinity.

I saw her hands pour out quick mercury
 Upon a bat's wing wrought with hieroglyphics,
 And then I saw her cast in gold and silver
 That melted with strange voice and sudden flame,
 The while she gazed on me most meaningly.
 And then . . . when all was done. . . .

[The vision consuming him.]

My wife, my Rhea, lit with loveliness
 And as a spirit clad with resurrection,
 Rose up within my dream . . . fair, young
 and glad! . . .

Rhasis. But, master . . . are dreams true?

Arduin. Such dreams as these?

[Kindling.]

Rhasis. Pardon! I know not — only that you
 say

Some come of Ophiuchus —

The demon you have warned me of — who oft
 With thwarting laugh has struck the secret from
 you. . . .

Many before have followed the mirage

Of dreams — but to more thirst: trust not too
much!

Arduin. But fear? fear? you are falling from
me too?

Like Ion the son of him who . . . you? you
too?

At the prime moment?

Rhasis. No, my master, no!
But I would spare you pain unbearable.

Arduin. Ha! and believe — you do? — that all
wise men

Of all the world could so have been deceived?

Believe — do, do? — that she *cannot* arise?

Did not great Hermes say of the Elixir

It should be found —

And did not Polydos,

The Greek, chancing upon it, raise his friends

In battle slain? . . .

Did not the Jew of Galilee, the Christ,

Whom even you name Prophet, likewise win it?

[*Peacelessly.*]

Speak!

Rhasis. Master, yes! . . . But O! trust
not too much.

Wiser, I know, than all Arabia
Are you — like to Mahomet — were it not
That you have set within your heart a woman.
But if, perchance, the Elixir does not prove ——

Arduin. Availing? Have not all things pointed
to it?

The day she died
Did I not hear a voice
That breathed into my brain she should arise?
And as I waited did a book of wisdom
Not chance into my hands to show the way?
Were the first words I read not, *In ten years*
The miracle shall come —
Revealed to you within the land of the Sphinx?

Rhasis. So read it, so! But ——

Arduin. Is this not that land?
Are not those stones the pyramids that thro
The ages have stood waiting for this hour ——

When I shall bring her back, O unto breath?
 Is not that face the Sphinx,
 Whose timeless and intemperable meaning
 No man has read in desert, star, or sea,
 But which must be the secret I unsphere?

Rhasis. O master!

Arduin. Fail, fail, fail? now to restore her?
 Who died as you shall know, here ere she rises,
 Because my brother — aieh! the father of Ion —
 Who bore as well that name —
 Desiring her, vilely accused her —

Myrrha (involuntarily, behind curtains). Oh! . . .

Arduin (bewildered). Who spoke? It was her
 voice?

[*Runs to sarcophagus.*

Rhasis. No, master, no! . . .

Arduin (slowly returning). Fail, fail to bring
 her fairness from the tomb!

Her face which can alone sow finitude's
 Fell desolation with enverdured dreams
 And fill the ways of the world again with hope?

I tell you she eternal must arise —
 Tho God die for it!

[Begins to gird himself.

Must! . . . and the hour is now! —
 Venus is in the house of ready Taurus,
 The moon is full, and as I toiled today,

[Goes to furnace.

From the alembic a strange cloud arose,
 And once again her face! . . . Prepare! pre-
 pare!

Rhasis. I will do all you say. But, master, if —
Arduin (immitigably). No death-word more of
 doubt. It is the power

Which holds us futile from omnipotence.

Mete out the sulphur

Into the alembic

Of Cleopatra's crystal.—I must see her!

[Rhasis hastens.

See her again, my Rhea, as she was,
 When plucking first the poppies of Provence!
 And hear flow from her

Words sweeter than Memnon's in the wind of dawn!
Here's gold and silver (*hands them*). She shall rise
and say:

“Years pale you, pale your brow, my Arduin,
And touch to gray the treasure of your hair,
But not Antinous could be so fair
To me — or wonderful:
For you have brought me from the cold tomb to
life! . . .

The bat's wing then! And to the sarcophagus
To lift its lid! for I will wait no longer —

*[Takes alembic, as Rhasis obeys, and continues
invokingly:*

But now, vial of immortality!
By the presaging of the seven planets,
And by the searchless sources of the Nile,
And by the prayers of Christian and of Heathen,
And by the elements earth, air and fire,
That hold within their intermingled veins
The secret of illimitable life —
By fate and time and God — I here conjure you

Bring forth the Elixir which shall make her rise!

[He pours the ingredients, and quickly fumes arise. They clear and a liquid is seen in the bottom of the glass. With a cry he starts toward the sarcophagus, when Myrrha's face — which, excited, has parted the curtains — stops him enspelled. Rhasis, unnerved, quits the room — leaving them agaze.]

Arduin (at length, as if to a spirit).

I do not dream? . . . you have arisen? . . .

Rhea!

[Starting toward her.]

Arisen ere I touched you? — O fear not!

For I am Arduin! do you not know me?

[She trembles speechless.]

O wonderful awaking! O . . . at last!

Tho yet the memory of the tomb is on you! . . .

This land is Egypt, whither in my grief

I brought you, my dead bride! Look on me! see!

[Stops quickly.]

But no, not yet! until my youth comes back,
 As now it will,
 Over the sea from France!
 Already passion lifts away the years
 That weight its wings and I am as I was,
 Now gaze upon me, now! Is it not I?

Myrrha. Sir—!

Arduin. Sir! O quickly see. For to my breast
 Again has striving brought you, to my bosom!
 The bitter nights are ended — the blind pits
 Sleepless and infinite. Awake! stare not
 So strangely! press your lips in praise to mine,
 Your breast upon my breast! . . . Delay you
 still?

Myrrha. O sir — !

Arduin. See, see! the years have been too long.

[Clasps her, dropping alembic.]

My arms have waited an infinitude.

[She struggles.]

Do you not now remember with my lips

To yours, the brimming beauty of our youth?

Myrrha. Release me!

Arduin. Awake and know me! It is I!
Your lover Arduin whom once you wooed:
Whose every word was to you as a wind
Of God! whose every kiss. . . . Do you
not see?

Myrrha. No, no! I'm not your love —

Arduin. Not —? You uprisen?
Has the tomb treachery to change the soul?
Ye skies, must I go mad now at this moment
When I have brought her back from destiny?
Not mine? . . . Awake! Oblivion enthralls
you.

[*Suddenly starting from her.*

Or is it that there in the grave, another —?

Myrrha. No, no! but —

Arduin. Ha, then! if not — if it be
not —

Is it that here returned you wish another?

You who so gaze upon my goaded brow

And face grown old with toil to conquer death?
 O youth ruthless to age! e'en tho its furrows
 Were got for your delight! — Ingratitude! —
 Have I so hungered thro long years to pluck
 A flower of Hell back to the light! . . . No,
 No!

It cannot be! . . . You shall be mine!

Myrrha (*in terror*). Sir, sir!

Arduin. Mad will I be, as they have thought me,
 mad

In holding that which I have given life.

Myrrha. But you mistake! . . . I am not
 what you think.

Hear me, for I love one who —

Arduin. Is not — I?
 [*As to invisible judges.*]

You hear her say it?

Myrrha. O, I love but Ion,

Your —

Arduin. Ion, my brother! Then, God! it was
 true,

And being true thy Heaven is but a brothel!

She was unfaithful to me, as he said!

And in the other world has met and clasped him!

Myrrha. No, let me speak!

Arduin. And spurn me more with it?

Shall I abide mockery like a mummy!

Ha-ha! (*A laugh that racks him.*)

Years but to hear her say that she loves him!

To see her come back from the grave, where she

Has still embraced him, still — and to my face,

On which the rage of sleepless toil is wrought,

Tell me. . . . [*Pauses.*]

She shall die for it! God, whose stars
Are vermin, she shall die!

Myrrha. O!

Arduin (frenziedly). Die, die, die!
As trustless women should: until no womb
Of lies is left in the world! Die, and be shut
Again into the curst sarcophagus
From whence I brought her . . .

Myrrha (in his grasp). Sir! — help! — sir! do not!

O, I will love you!

Arduin. Liar! and turn from him
Whom you betrayed me for — and swear again
False love to me? Then . . . in the tomb
do it!

[Begins to choke her.

Myrrha. O!

Arduin. Aieh! cry out to him! will he
not help you?

Myrrha. Ion!

Arduin. That word withering in your throat
Shall stale you past all hope of resurrection.

[Strangles her — and then looks around.
So, it is done. . . . And now, back to your
tomb,

Which I will bury in the desert sands
So deep that not eternity can find it.

[Begins to draw her toward sarcophagus.
And yet (*stopping stricken*) all is not well . . .
I now could weep.

[With lone anguish.

I know not wherefore — only that my heart
 Is wounded and seems bleeding o'er the hours
 That I must live! . . . O Rhea! . . . O,
 my love!

[Strangely, kissing her.]

Do you not hear the nightingale that sang
 The song of our betrothal in Provence?
 It sits upon. . . .

[Changing again.]

Accursed face! accurst! forevermore!
 Within the tomb lie (*dragging her*) blind, deaf,
 motionless,
 Until —

*[Looking into the coffin becomes transfixed,
 while MYRRHA'S limp body slips slowly
 from his arms. He gazes at her, at his
 wife, and tries to understand. But can-
 not, and so, standing long troubled, moans:]*

I am not well; perchance Rhasis will come
 And tell me what it is that I desired.

Men should not toil o'ermuch; there's madness
in it.

*[Then seeing MYRRHA'S face and starting
from it wildly:*

Rhasis! Rhasis! Rhasis! . . . Oh-oh-oh-oh!

*[Runs madly off right, as ION and RHASIS
enter left. They look around, see MYRRHA
and rush to her — with a cry.*

CURTAIN

O-UMÈ'S GODS

CHARACTERS

O-UMÈ *A Samurai Girl*
AMA *Her Servant, an old woman*
SANKO *A Young Samurai*
and
A YOUNG JESUIT PRIEST

O-UMÈ'S GODS

TIME: *The Sixteenth Century.*

PLACE: *Japan.*

SCENE: *A room in the house of O-Umè in a province near the sea. Its shoji, or sliding paper doors, open in the rear upon a wistaria arbor overhanging a river, upon which lighted lanterns, sent forth on the night of the Feast of the Dead, are dimly floating; while the moon above gleams upon the pale distant snow-cone of Fujiyama. The room with its deep straw mats and walls delicately portrayed with pine and bamboo has a paper-paned door on the right leading to a garden, and is lighted by andon — one beneath a shrine to Buddha on the left wall, and one to the left centre where O-UMÈ and AMA are sitting*

on their heels, constrained, foreboding and verging toward inevitable words.

Ama (at length). Down to the sea! the sea!
 Oh the dead!
 Do they not seem
 On the night air to hover?
 There by the lights
 Are not their spirits present?
 The lights lit for them?

[O-UMÈ *is silent.*

All our ancestors are they!
 Fathers and mothers
 Of many lives back!
 They hear us speaking,
 They hear from the Buddha-shrine
 There on the wall.
 They see us thinking.

[*Meaningly.*

They see in our hearts!

O-Umè (who trembles). Be silent! silent!

Ama (*bowing but continuing*). They know if we
care for them —

Know as the wind
That visits all shoji,
Know as the night
That searches all places.
Alas for the son
Who does not honor them!
And for the daughter
Who does not cherish them!
They shall ——

O-Umè. Be silent!

[*A pause.*]

Ama. Alas for the daughter!

O-Umè (*who rises disturbedly*).

The lips of the old
Are like leaves dying —
Leaves of Autumn
That ever flutter!

[*Walks about.*]

Ama. And a girl's mind

Is like the dawn mist —
 Knowing not whither
 To rest or wander —
 Until, perchance,
 It clings to Fuji,
 To Fuji mountain,
 Lord of the air!
 The mind of a girl . . . straying!
 And what is O-Umè's? . . . whose?
O-Umè. It is O-Umè's!

Ama.

Ai!

Not Sanko's! . . .
 But were I she,
 O-Umè the fair,
 O-Umè the mist
 Of happy karmas,
 Sanko should be
 My Fuji mountain.
 Him would I cling to,
 Nor would I hunger
 To stray far from him

With a white priest!
 To stray far from him
 To foreign gods
 That hang on a cross.

[Again bowing.]

Is he not strong?

O-Umè. Be silent!

[To herself, troubled.]

The lips of the old!

The lips of the old!

Ama. Is he not brave?

O-Umè.

I care not.

A samurai is he —

One whose sword is his soul.

Ama. And should his tongue be
 Like that of the other,
 The priest of the pain-god?

[Immovably.]

Is he not kind?

O-Umè: He is kind.

Ama. Kind! as O-Umè is cruel!

O-Umè. No, but as men are,

Wanting women:

Yet not once so was he!

For as children

We caught together

The June-night fire-flies

Out by the shrine of jiso.

Ama. And then he loved you,

And ever has loved you,

And faithful is he!

O-Umè. Ai, and terrible! . . .

Ama. Terrible only

Because O-Umè

Turns from her fathers

And from the gods.

She sees their soul-ships

Sail to the sea —

The lights lit for them,

[*Motions without.*

And yet she offers

No cakes of welcome —
 None of farewell!
 No prayer to Buddha,
 Lotus-loving,
 And none to Kwannon
 Who is all mercy.
 But inward, inward
 She turns her eyes
 To see this stranger,
 Priest of the Christ-god.
 Outward, outward,
 Ever she gazes
 And ever listens,
 Ever, for him! . . .
 Oh false, false one!
 False to the dead —
 False to Sanko! . . .

O-Umè (more distressedly). The words of the old
 Are like the leaves,

[Her voice breaks.

Like Autumn leaves

That ever flutter.

Ama. And those of the young —

O-Umè (*becoming distraught*). Oh will she hush
not! . . .

Will this servant,
Whom my mother
Dying left me,
Waste my heart so?

[Weeps in her sleeve.]

Sanko I fear,
And fears of many
Worlds crowd round me —
Many karmas
Of pain and passion,
Births and rebirths.

Ama. And 'tis because
This evil priest
Stands in the door of your heart.

O-Umè. Will you revile him!

Ama. Cursed be he!

O-Umè. Ama!

Ama. I pray it!

[Rises slowly.]

And curst he shall be.

[O-Umè stares trembling.]

For, O blind one,
By him blinded,
Do you not know
The people have heard
How he has bid you
Cast away from you
The gods of your house?
The blessed Buddha
And all the tablets
Kept, ancestral?
Ai, they have heard
And tonight have risen!
This night of the dead
They have gone forth,
With Sanko to lead them —
Gone to tear down
The house of the priest!

Gone to destroy
 The image he worships!
 Gone to —

O-Umè (stricken). Ama!

[Shrinks from her and then speaks wanly.]

Never is there
 Trust in any?
 Only faith that fades?
 This was known —
 But kept from me,
 Kept in silence,
 Kept for Sanko? . . .
 O lord Buddha,
 Thou, or Christ,
 Is there peril? —

[Turns on her.]

You have done ill!

Ama. I have done well.

O-Umè. Ill! and ill shall come to you!

For do you think
 So to prevent me

From my fate-way?

No, I will find it!

The Buddha and all

The tablets ancestral

Will I take down from the wall,

And from me cast them

Into the river. . .

They shall float down to the sea.

[Turns and goes to shrine.]

Ama. O-Umè! O-Umè!

[Catching at her kimono.]

The gods forsaken

Will pardon never!

The gods — and the people!

You will become

Eta, an outcast,

From them driven away.

O-Umè!

[The girl takes the shrine.]

Remember your father

Dead, and your mother.

They are hovering
 Round your fingers,
 Faint, offended!
 Will you pause not?

[When O-Umè continues.

Ah for Sanko! for Sanko!

[Runs calling to door.

Sanko! Sanko!

[O-Umè stops motionless.

Sanko! . . .

O-Umè (after a pause). He waits then there?

A Voice (without). Ama! *(nearer)* Ama! . . .

[SANKO enters from the garden, dishevelled and breathless, but controlled. As he does so O-UMÈ drops the shrine and the image falls out.

Sanko. O-Umè! O-Umè!

[Ama goes quickly out.

O-Umè (again motionless). Honourable friend!

[With polished anger.

You dwell in my garden?

And is my house
Even as your house?

Sanko. Be pleased to pardon! . . .

O-Umè. And you conspire here
With Ama against me?

Sanko. O-Umè knows
The samurai's honour.

O-Umè. O-Umè thought so,
But does no longer!

Sanko. Ah the plum-blossom!
Then it too
Has thorns and poison?

O-Umè. Yes, for the hand of Sanko!
Knowing the deed
From whence he comes.
Knowing that . . .

[Breaks off, tensely.]

Where is the priest's house?

Sanko (angrily). Cast in the river!

O-Umè. Ai, for I see
The blood on your hand

From the torn rafters!

Red, red blood

Of a deed of fury.

So I tell you,

Samurai rude,

Not for one life,

Even for one,

Will I be yours.

Please . . . to leave me.

[He looks at his hand and is going.

And yet . . . (*as he stops*) . . . not thus!

[She struggles.

The priest would bid me

Bind up your wound.

And you were once

Sanko my friend! —

Put forth your hand!

[He does so.

The blood —

Sanko (with sudden fierceness). The blood is his!

[As she falls back with a cry.

His! I have slain him!

[*Mockingly.*

And did his ghost
 Not come here flitting?
 Coldly flitting?
 Here with moaning
 Does it not hang
 Upon the roof-tree
 Hungering for you?
 He lay in the dark —
 One lay with him —
 One who escaped to the river.
 But him I slew
 That you might never
 Turn from the Buddha
 And from your fathers;
 Turn dishonoured
 Of all who greet you.

O-Umè (speech coming at last)

Ah! A-hi! Slain! . . .
 It cannot be!

Sanko (drawing a bloody sword).

And is this wet with dew?

O-Umè. O let it pierce
Your own heart, samurai!
For you shall never
Again know peace.
I will pray to
The lord of Nippon,
To the Shogun —
Who gave entrance
Here to the Christ-priest;
Nay, I will die
Myself that ever
You may be hated
By your own heart.

[Starts toward river.

I will cast
Myself to the soul-world
And bid the dead
To bring you evil!
Then the priest shall. . .

[Breaks off — for standing in the arbour is the priest, pale and spectral. He has come up to the steps from the river. At the sight SANKO plucks her back, as if from a ghost. A pause, then the priest speaks sacrosanctly.]

The Priest. The Christ looks on you,

[Lifts a crucifix.]

You, a murderer —
 Tho it is not
 I you have murdered.

[SANKO gazes.]

One slept with me,
 A gentle servant,
 Slept in my cloak . . . you have slain him.

[Steps forward.]

The Christ looks on you.
 He will forgive you.

[A pause.]

Sanko (recovering). Priest!

The Priest.

Forgive you.

[Holds crucifix toward him.]

Sanko. By the eight million
Gods, he mocks me!

[Dashes it to floor.]

And shall perish
Or go from this village!

The Priest. Aye . . . but only
When goes this maiden
Whom you would hold
Still to her idols.
She must follow
The Cross of Heaven.

Sanko. She shall follow
O priest, but me.

The Priest. Murderer, pause! . . .
There is a Hell
Where the lost burn
Even as say your sutras.

[Sanko lifts his sword.]

Pause! and strike not!

The smitten Christ
 No longer holds
 My hands from strife.

[Towers over him.]

O-Umè, I bid you
 Now cast away
 The gilded gods you have worshipped.

Sanko. And I forbid

O-Umè *to move.*

O-Umè (heedless of either). And I, O-Umè,
 O'er whom you quarrel,
 And whom you tear
 Twixt Christ and Buddha,
 I, O-Umè, will end it.

*[Lifts the BUDDHA from the floor, and the
 crucifix, over her head.]*

Be all the gods forsaken —
 Even as these!

*[Goes to river and casts them in. Then meets
 their horror with ever increasing passion.]*

Be all!

And be you gone
Forevermore!
For if again
I see your faces,
If again
They grieve my hours,
If again
While Fuji stands there —
The river shall gulf me, too.
I swear it by the dead.

[They look at her awed, then go slowly, silently out. She sinks on her heels, hands folded, and stares before her. The lights on the river drift on.]

CURTAIN

THE IMMORTAL LURE

CHARACTERS

- GIORGIONE *A Young Painter*
ARETINO *A Dissolute Poet*
TITIAN *Another Painter*
BELLINI *The Former Master of Giorgione and
Titian*
GIGIA *An old woman serving Giorgione
and*
ISOTTA

THE IMMORTAL LURE

TIME: *The antiquity of India.*

SCENE: *Before the hermitage of VISHWAMYA and RISHYAS, in a forest near the Ganges. It is an open space spread with kusa-grass and overhung with trees — the hermitage itself being a cell constructed of earth and of hanging roots of the banyan, and having by it an altar before which lies a deer-skin. Glimmering lights and running water penetrate the shades, whose sacredness is soon disturbed by the appearance of SUNANDI, wantonly compelling KOIL, with alternate harshness and wheedling, to enter with her.*

Sunandi (peering about). The place, my jewel-
bird! the place for it!

Under these boughs of peepul and asoka
The young saint dwells
With his restraining sire,
Singing the Vedas morning, eve and noon,
And they are gone somewhither now in the wood
To gather fruit for sacrifice, and flowers.

[*With a leer.*]

But he, the boy, will soon return, my pretty.

Koïl (whom she has released). And you have
drawn me from the city here
To break into his holy breast with passion?
To dance and sing and seize him?
I you have taught the wiles of winning men,
As the cobra-charmer teaches,
Must lure him from his saintly innocence,
And with the beauty I was born unto
Must tangle him? . . .
You, O Sunandi, are an evil woman,
To lead me to it!

Sunandi. And you talk as flies talk!
Who know not that the gods sow food or famine.

[*Harshly.*

I tell you that great Indra of the skies
Is wroth with us
And will not send us rain,
So wisest Brahmins vow —
Until this boy, here dwelling,
This saintly one, is brought unto the Raja!
Are we to die because not otherwise
Than with alluring now we can appease them?

[*Leering again.*

And why are women fair, my cunning Koil,
But to tempt men then, when they seek to take us——

Koil. Sunandi!

Sunandi. It is so, unwitted girl!
Be silent then
And do what I command.

[*Wheedling again.*

And who beholds not beauty is as dead.

[*Starts.*

But ha? 'tis he?

No, only parakeets—

Chattering as you chatter, idle girl!

Who ever were resistant to my teachings!

I tell you chirp no more these chastities!

If you come back to the Raja

And without him,

Know you what then will happen?

Koïl.

I know not.

[*Hears a voice.*

Nor care not. I will return.

Sunandi. Stop, girl.

Koïl.

I will not.

All others will I tempt, but —

Sunandi (holding her). Him will love!

[*Looks in her eyes as RISHIYAS approaches, chanting.*

And you were suckled at the breast of fortune

To be the first so fair a saint shall look on.

Use well your charms — and chain him with enchantment.

[Sees the girl is enthralled by the voice and goes into wood. RISHYAS then enters opposite, laden and singing:

Spirit of the risen sun! . . .

Now returns the offering-hour. . . .

Fruit I bring to you and flower, . . .

Here receive them, O great—

[Breaks off, at sight of her, and the offerings fall slowly from his arms.

Koïl (as they gaze long and tremblingly).

O saint, is it peace with you, and is all well?

And have you roots and fruit enough for food;

And have you joy in singing holy Vedas

Here in this leafy-hearted hermitage?

Rishyas. O radiant one, yes — all is godly well.

But whence are you?

And whither do you go?

I have dwelt only here, and not before

Have I beheld so fair a vision fall —

Even from skies where wing the Apsaras.

Koîl. I am not fair, O son of Vishwamyâ,

[*Timidly.*

But I have come from very far away.

Rishyas (quickly). And I have offered you no
laving-water

For hands and feet,

Nor any fruit and herbs!

Will you not sit upon this mat of kusa,

Or on this skin of the wild antelope,

And let me loose your sandals? — O sweet saint,

For saint so bright an one must be! — it will

Be dear to touch and tend you!

For in this place I have beheld no other —

Only my father,

Who is old and mighty

In meditations he would have me mind.

But you are fair as well. Will you not sit?

Koîl. No, pious one, it is not meet for me
To touch the holy water — yet I thank you.

Rishyas. Not meet for you? O, unto one who is

So beautiful, are not all things most meet?
 Better are you, I know, than all the devas.
 And tho for but a moment I have seen you,
 I fain would follow
 The holy vows you follow.
 For you I would do all things. When I gaze
 Upon you all my body is as fire
 Upon the altar when I sacrifice.
 Will you not eat or drink?

Koîl.

Not at your hands.

But see, O holy one, here are rare cakes,
 Brought with me from afar, and here is soma,
 Sparkling and ready with divinity
 To lift whoever drinks of it to joy.
 Drink you with me!

Rishyas.

O gladly will I; give it.

[Takes the flask; drinks deeply.]

A wine of wonder is it and of wisdom,
 For now it makes you seem even more fair
 Than first you were.
 O let me tend about you,

And let me wreath your brow and limbs with
flowers.

[Takes some and entwines them over her.

Koïl (trembling). And you are beautiful. So I
will weave

Flowers upon you too. And see, and see,

O, Rishyas, see,

For I will dance to you —

The dance of all the dreamers in the world!

[Unbinds her body-cloth and begins to dance

— slowly at first then more alluringly,

as he follows her, marcelling. Then at

length she stops close up to him and

murmurs:

Does it not fill your heart, O Rishyas,

With longing?

Rishyas. Yes, yes, yes. And with desire,

I know not why, to lay my lips to yours!

Then life, it seems, would burst all ill that binds it.

[Instinctively; clasping her.

Oh this is sweeter than all other joys

Of holiness that I have ever known.
 Your voice is like to piping of the koils
 That play in spring.

Koil. And Koil am I named.

Rishyas. And what is this I feel for you, O wise
 one?

In skies from whence you come, what is its name?
 So pure are you that surely you can tell me?

Koil. O holy one, the people call it love.

Rishyas. Then is love better than all other bliss
 My father's meditations ever bring.

And I will seek thro all the lapse of lives
 To hold you thus,

And have your arms about me,
 As vines about the asoka clingingly.

Happy am I that you have found me out,
 And never shall you leave me.

Koil. No — for ever!

[*More passionately.*

But unto the city you shall go with me
 And there with Brahmin rites be made my husband.

Rishyas. Which is—I know not what—yet
will I be

Husband and more to you. For now it seems
That not the tiger in his jungle-might,
Nor any incarnation terrible,
Could tear you from me.

Koïl. Then come quickly, now,
And I will be for you a champa-flower,
Swung sweetly and forever to your breast.
And often will I dance for you and sing
And love you, Rishyas, as a deva-queen!
Come quickly, one is waiting in the wood
To guide us.

Rishyas. Yes, O yes! (*remembering*) But stay!
my father!
First I will tell him I have won this wisdom.

Koïl. No, no!

Rishyas. Yes! (*calls*) Father! father!

Koïl (in terror). Rishyas, no!
But come, come with me quickly.

Rishyas (astonished). Do you fear?

Koil. He is so old! . . . You guess not what
you do.

Haste, or he will forbid.

Rishyas. You know him not.
For I will tell him you are a holier saint
To guide my steps,
Then will he bid me go.
Ho! father! ho!

Vishwamyā (heard off). My son, you call? I
come.

Koil. O, I must flee—

Rishyas (dazed). I do not understand.

Koil. Sunandi! Speak, Sunandi!— Ah, he comes.

[VISHWAMYA enters and seeing her stops
amazed. SUNANDI enters behind unseen.

Deep suspense.

Rishyas (uncomprehendingly). Do you see, father,

I have found one here

Holy, and fairer than the Apsaras.

And I shall follow her, she is some goddess.

For I desire only to be with her,

And she has taught me this desire is love.

O and I love her,

And tho yet I know

Not well what miracle love is in me,

Yet it is better than this hermitage.

For it has made me seem. . . . But what
so burns you?

Vishwamya. My son, you are beguiled. Let
go her hand

That leads you on to ruin. Do you not
Behold what manner of creature you so clasp?

Rishyas. Yes, yes — a deva!

Vishwamya. Deva! This is a woman,
And women like the wind are full of wiles,
And tempt saints to abandon Swerga's rest.
He who would rule his mind has naught with them.
Let go her hand and send her away.

Rishyas (amazed). Away!

Never shall she go from me and without me.
If women are evil, as you say, she is not,
Therefore she is no woman.

Vishwamya.

O vain boy!

In passion's jungle! Break from her at once!

Rishyas. I will not. Her I worship, holily.

And she has given me a drink of heaven

That has diffused deity in my limbs.

Vishwamya. And death, and an eternity of
births!—

These flowers . . . and her feigning . . .
have bewitched you!

[*Seizes them.*

I tear them off and trample them to earth.

Koil. Rishyas! Rishyas!

Rishyas. Be not afraid, my Koil;

He is my father

And he knows you not,

For did he, he would clasp you, as I clasp.

Or it may be that he is little pleased

Because I find you holier than he.

O father, peace. Control your mind. Farewell.

I go with her.

Vishwamya. Beguilèd boy! you shall not.

Thro all these years I have not, from its lair,
Unloosed black anger.

But this evil one

And your desire to follow ways of flesh

Compel me. Come, come from her!

Rishyas. I will never.

Vishwamyā. Then must I drag you — and drive
her away.

[*Strikes Koīl.*

Away, lust-thing! away!

Rishyas. Oh, oh! Oh, oh!

[*In horror.*

A demon enters into you and dupes you

To strike her thus, a holy one. Restrain!

Vishwamyā. No, tho I slay her!

Rishyas. Slay? O wickedness!

[*Seizes up wood of sacrifice.*

Must I beat off your hands? — Touch her no more.

Vishwamyā. Wild-vaunting boy! the drink and
this vile girl

Have maddened you. (*To Koīl*) Away!

Rishyas. Call her not vile!

Vishwamyā. Viler is she than sin!

[Again strikes her.

Rishyas (uncontrollably). You do a death-deed.

[Falls on him with the weapon and fells him quickly to the ground — then recoils with a cry. The old man strives vainly to rise.

Koīl. Oh, oh! — what have you done!

Vishwamyā (mortally hurt). Slain . . . slain his father!

And lost enlightenment . . . and peace . . . forever!

[After a struggle, terribly.

But not to gorge upon the fruit of sin!

[Turning on KOİL.

The curse of bitter karmas be upon you!

May you be born a worm and crawl in slime,

A serpent thro ten score of lives, and slough

Your skin in hideousness and hate and horror!

Koīl. Oh, oh!

Vishwamyā. At every death may you despair

Of ever acquiring merit!

Rishyas (terrified). Father!

Vishwamya (to him).

Aye!

[*His strength failing.*]

For love, blood-guilty boy, such love as she
Has slipped into your heart, is the curse of the
world,

The immortal lure of all the generations!

Your arms have ached with it about her body,

But know that in the city whence she came

All evil men feel in their hearts this ache.

And that you may escape from it, know this:

Not your arms, yours alone, have been entwined

About this poison-flower — but, perchance,

[*Sinking back.*]

The arms of many.

Rishyas (starting painedly). What is it he means?

[*With emotions he does not understand.*]

Koil, what has he said?

Koil.

O let me go!

Rishyas. The arms of many? that can not be true?

[Tortured by half-born thoughts.

O, have I fallen into demon-snares?

Is beauty not the bloom of piety?

Speak.

Koïl. I would go!

Rishyas. Pain! only darker pain!

Koïl (at length overwhelmed). I am not holy —
nor am I pollution!

But only one sent hither — O, the gods

Bid us to sin, then fell us with calamity!

[Hurries weeping off with SUNANDI, who has stood in terror. RISHYAS stands dazed, then comprehension dawns upon him and he falls by his father's body in a storm of anguish.

PORZIA

FIRST PUBLISHED 1913

To
GILBERT MURRAY
POET, DRAMATIST, AND MASTER-INTERPRETER
OF A GREAT LITERATURE

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PREFACE

Some years ago while writing "A Night In Avignon" the thought came to me of framing two other plays that should deal respectively with the Renaissance spirit at its height and decadence, as that play had dealt with it at its beginning. For the great human upheaval that came intoxicatingly to Italy during the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is so full of æsthetic contrast and glamor as to be peculiarly suitable for the doubly exacting purposes of poetic drama.

"Giorgione," the second of these plays to be written, was published in 1911 with three other plays in a volume entitled "The Immortal Lure," and like "A Night In Avignon" was received with such kindness as to encourage me to write the third, here presented under the name of "Porzia."

This last play, whose period is that of "decadent Humanism," or as Symonds prefers to call it, of "The Catholic Reaction," is laid in Naples, where the passions of men, more than freed from the long domination of the Church and the Hereafter, seemed to reach in their grasp at this life almost incredible heights and depths of excess. And yet from amid this excess, as from a rank and unweeded garden, were springing into flower many seeds of modern intellectual enfranchisement, as the achievements of Bruno and his contemporaries witness.

I need only add that I have sought to use materials that would be true to the time of this final portrayal, and that I therefore trust it may be understood as an organic member of the group to which it belongs.

C. Y. R.

ACT I

CHARACTERS

- RIZZIO DI ROSSI *A young Leader of the Literati at
Naples, suspected of heresy*
- OSIO *His Brother*
- PORZIA *His Wife*
- ALOYSIUS *Her Uncle, a Physician*
- BIANCA *Her Cousin, a Florentine, once
betrothed to Osio*
- GIORDANO BRUNO . . . *A young Dominican, also heretical*
- MONSIGNOR QUERIO . . *An Officer of the Inquisition*
- TASSO *A Poet*
- MARINA *A Sicilian serving Porzia*
- MATTEO *Serving Rizzio, later Osio*
- Dancers from Capri, Musicians, Guards of the Inquisition, etc.*

TIME — About 1570

PORZIA

SCENE: *A portion of the house, terrace and garden of Rizzio on his wedding-day at Naples. It is so situated as to command a view of the city, the blue Bay with Capri set like a topaz in it, the Vesuvian coast, and the Mountain itself — rising like a calm though unappeasable monitor against the land's too sensual enchantment.*

The house, a white corner of which is visible along the right, has large doors toward the back giving upon the terrace. A vine-clad terrace wall, several feet above the level of the terrace, but much above that of the street without, runs across the rear to a cypress-set gate in the centre, and on into the lustrous Spring foliage of ilex, myrtle and orange.

A pedestaled image of the Virgin against the

house, a statue of Pan before a bower opposite, and several stone seats forward, are decked with orange blossoms that glow in the light of late afternoon.

Music, reveling, and laughter are heard, muffled, within. Then amid a louder burst of them Osio strides angrily forth. He is followed in argumentative elation by Rizzio — clothed in Greek raiment, a book in his hand — and by Bruno.

Osio (as they come down). Proof from the
teeth of aliens and fools

And infidels that follow their own reason?

I want no proof! your books should burn in Hell!

Rizzio (gaily). Because they glorify the stars
in heaven?

Osio. I say they are heresy!

Rizzio.

And I say truth!

[Uplifts volume.

That were your ears not stopped with sophistries

And Jesuitry you would adjudge divine!

[Tosses it down.]

Bruno. Ai, Signor Osio, there's no denying!

[Porzia appears anxiously at the door.]

We need but look,

To learn that stars are worlds

Swung out upon infinitudes of space.

And as for earth —

Tho Christ shed blood upon it —

'Tis but a pilgrim flame among them all.

[Porzia leaves door.]

Osio (turning upon him). And you, a monk,
will say so to the Church

And to the Holy Office?

Bruno (in humorous alarm). God forbid!

Osio. And you, Rizzio, who on your wedding-
day,

Mid rites of Venus

And revels to Apollo,

Wear pagan robes — and prink others in them —

Rizzio. Ho, others! meaning Porzia?

Osio. I say — *[Mirth within.*

Rizzio (laughing at him). What, what, my merry
raging brother, more?

That Pan is not your god, whom I but now
Besought for inward beauty and truth of soul?
No, no, he is not, by Vesuvius!

Osio. I say —

Rizzio. That Plato and the ancients are
A plague which only the Pope can purge from earth?
[Again laughing.

Ai! to the flames with them, and with all fairness!

Osio. I say that you —

Rizzio. Hey, yea! that I who fall
Not on my knees to mitred villainy —
Or cringe to crosiered craft —
And yet whose life is lit for truth and freedom —
Am viler far than you
Who take your pleasure and pay it with confession?
Who think the Devil with faith would be no Devil?

[Porzia again appears with Bianca.

You hear it, Bruno?

Osio. I say there is one thing
You shall not do!

Rizzio. So-ho! my lordly brother,
My breaker of betrothals — if not creeds —
And that is what?

Osio. I will protect her from it!

Rizzio. Her?

Osio. Porzia! from the passion of your lies!
[*Astonishment.*

Rizzio (stung, staring). By . . . all the saints and
fiends and incubi
That ever infested night and nunneries!
What frenzy now is biting at your brain!

[*Before him.*

Is she your wife, so to concern your care?

[*They face, pale.*

*Porzia (who sees, and with Bianca comes quickly,
winningly down).*

Heresy! heresy! truth and heresy!
Are there no other words in all the world
To pour as wine

Upon a wedding-day! —

Are these your ways, my newly wedded lord,
To leave me, an hour's bride, away from home —
From my dear uncle's home —

With but a friend or two for comforting —
And bandy words of other stars than those
You swear to see when gazing in my eyes!

Rizzio (responsively). My Porzia!

Porzia. No, no! I'll not forgive you!

For is it not ill boding to our bridals
You quarrel over the heavens — and not me!

[*As he laughs.*]

My beauty, he says, this husband I have taken,
Is life — and yet ere 'tis an hour his
Forgets to live on it! — and Osio,
The brother of him, —
E'en Osio there —

Rizzio (gay again). Who swears he will protect
you!

[*Osio starts.*]

Porzia. Protect?

Rizzio. Against the heresy of robes
Of pagan fashion — and against your husband!

[*Constraint. Porzia sees Bianca flush.*

Porzia. I do not understand — unless you jest,
As oft — too oft you do!

Or mean perchance Bianca . . . unto whom
He was betrothed

And whom he would, this breath,

Be wooing again, were *I*, not *words*, your bride!

[*Then winningly again, as Marina enters.*

But see, here is Marina! the dance awaits!

[*Music is heard.*

Let us go in and give ourselves to Joy,

For Misery is quick enough to take us,

If first we do not wed us to her rival!

Is it not so?

Rizzio (with passion). Or sun has never shone!

So in! the tarantelle! (*as Tasso enters*) And then

a song

From Messer Tasso, who would be divine,

[*Greets him.*

Did he love Venus as he fears the Church,
Apollo as he shuns the Inquisition!

In! — Osio, will you come?

Osio. I will not.

Rizzio. Then

Dance with your own mad humors and delusions
Here to Vesuvius and to the sea,—
Or to Bianca plead your pardon!

(To the rest) Come!

[Seizes blossoms blithely.

For in this world there's but one heresy,
Denial of the divinity of Joy!

*[Throws sprays over Porzia, takes her hand
and they go singing. All follow, but
Osio and Bianca.*

Osio (when their steps have died; in cold rage).

You shall hear more of this, my pretty brother!

Prater of pagan doubts!

Whom — but that God may use it — I would curse

For the resemblance that our mother gave us!

For, by the living blood of San Gennaro,

In yon Duomo, the scoffing siren song
Of heresy that swells in you shall cease,
Tho it shall take the sweat of the rack to hush it!
You shall hear more! . . .

Bianca (who has stood long indignant). And
others shall hear more!

[Her voice breaking as she turns on him.

Others who fix upon me this affront
Of broken and humiliate betrothals!

[As he attempts to speak.

Yes! you have made of me a thing of shame
Here in the eyes
Of those who're alien to me!
That you have loved me not — or love me less
Than once you did, too well I came to know —
I — with the blood in me of the Medici! —
And now it is open prate! . . . But do you
think

The women of my city want resentment,
Or less than these sun-lusting ones of Naples
Know how to cool their wrath?

Osio. I think you mad —

In a mad maze —

And yield it no concern;

Nor shall — (*meaningly*) until a thing you know is
done.

As to betrothals, give your memory breath:

Ours was agreed to end as either willed.

[*Goes from her to gate and looks expectantly out.*

Bianca (as he returns). And you, weary of it,
have utterly

Chosen to end it?

[*Sits.*

Osio: Have I so affirmed?

Bianca (springing up). I will not have evasions,
Osio!

Shiftings and turnings

Radiant of hopes

That torture expectation till it breaks.

[*Again sitting.*

And yet — perchance it is as well they come

Now . . . while there yet is time for *more* with-
drawals.

Osio (startling). More?

Bianca. For — I fear all trust in you is folly;
 And that the heresy of Rizzio
 Which I agreed with you to take unto
 Monsignor Querio —

Osio (clenching). Shall not be taken?

[She rises.]

Not! but you leave the brunt to me alone?

Bianca. You purpose more, I think, than to
 restrain him.

Osio. And you more than abjuring! You would
 gaze

Upon his godless schisms, . . .
 Upon the naked luring of his lies!

Bianca. No! Tho the beauty of them —

Osio. Beauty! beauty!

[Striking the Pan near him.]

That wind of infidelity from Hell
 He blows out of his lips do you call beauty!
 No! — and he with his poets and philosophers,
 His Platos

And star-mad Copernicas,
 And that Dominican, Giordano Bruno,
 For whom the stake to flames will yet be lit,
 Shall learn you are too late in your relenting!

Eianca (stricken). Too . . . late!

Osio. His heresies shall reap their due.

Bianca (death-pale). Which means — that you
 already have revealed them!

Have sent unto Monsignor Querio

To-day —

Rizzio's wedding-day! —

For that

It was you sought out Matteo, who, pledged

Unto Marina,

As were you to me,

Has broke his troth? . . .

And now, now you await him? — O was not

Your promise to me that a week should pend

Ere any step?

Osio. I will not lose my soul, [*Turns away.*]

And dallying is the feebleness of fools.

Bianca. And will lies save it — tho they be for
Heaven! —

To one who nigh has lost her soul for you?

[When he does not answer, more penetratively.]

We have been friends, Osio, long been friends,
And, woman that I am, I would 'twere more,
But in this I suspect —

Osio.

Enough! we prate!

[Rankling, uneasily.]

I say enough.

Bianca.

And I say all too little,

[Bitterly.]

Until I tell you now plain to your face,
And to your heart
Plunging toward this passion,
That not alone a hate of heresy
Is haunting you to it, but that the lips
And eyes and brows and soul of —

Osio.

Will you cease!

Bianca. I tell you that you love her — Porzia!
And veer but to the vision of her face!

Osio (who after strangling silence finds words).

If you say that, Bianca, ever again
Or if, by all the demons that Avernus
Pours out upon the black Phlegraeon fields,
You hint it or suggest it to her, till —

Bianca. Till you achieve her! and have wrapped
the rites

Of the Church round your achieving?
Till you have severed her from Rizzio —
Have swept her from perdition —
Into your swathing arms! I say you shall not!
Me you have set aside, but there an end!

[Starts toward door.

Osio. Stop! whither do you go?

Bianca. To call them! call!

And to betray your treachery — and mine!

[Calling.

Rizzio! Porzia! Rizzio!

Osio. Maledictions! *[Seizing her wrists.*

Will you become a dagger, and not know,
Stiletto that you are, what thing you stab!

Bianca. The infatuation festering within you!
Till, deaf with the desire of it and dream,
You cannot tell their voice from Deity's.

[*Calls again.*

Rizzio! Porzia! Tasso!

[*The music ceases.*

Rizzio (within; startled). It was Bianca!

[*Hastening to door with the rest crowding closely after.*
How? what? you called? what moves you? — Osio?

[*Looks around.*

Was some one here? what is it? speak! . . . Bianca?
What burns you?

Bianca. You shall hear! It must be told.

Yes, yes! . . . (*Struggling to say it*) . . .

And with no leavening delay of words.

We . . . I . . . You must be gone from here at
once;

At once — for there is peril.

Rizzio.

Pah-ho! peril?

Now, Scylla and the Sibyl and Charybdis!

What megrim have you had?

Bianca. None — for doubting;
Or any, it matters not, if you will go,
And quickly, trusting reason — as you boast to;
For I have heard —

Rizzio. Have heard what and from whom?
[*Again looks around.*]

Bianca. There was one here who said Monsignor
Querio
Knows of your excommunicant delight
In books that are forbid —
And . . . of your heresies!

Porzia (in quick dismay). The Inquisition!
You mean — he may be sought by it and seized,
Held in the trammels of it for a truth
That . . . ! Do you mean, Bianca, Osio,
That now, at any hour — ? . . . Oh, he must
go!

[*Hears noise at gate.*]

And quickly! In, Rizzio, in, for they —!

[*The gate opens and Matteo entering stops
amazed and alarmed.*]

Rizzio (with laughing relief). Now, now, do you
not see your apprehension!

Is Matteo the Inquisition! Is
He then the prison that has come to seize me?
Fie, fie, Bianca, with your fears that mar
Again the bridal beauty of this hour,
And crowd with quiverings the bliss of it!
No more of them! — (*to dancers*) Hither! and wind
your maze!

Again take up the dance!

Porzia.

No, Rizzio, no!

For now delight would die under our feet,
And we but trample on it! No! Dismiss them
Back now to Capri! . . .
More than the woman fear within me warns it.
For you have been o'er bold — not vainly, nay,
For truth, I know, must dare — but there may be
More in this than you think.

Rizzio.

And ere it rises

I cravenly must quench the altar-fires
That I attend — and our half-wedded joys?

No! no! More revels!
 Till we shall utterly uncloud our bliss
 And leave remembrance not a stain upon it!
 A song, Tasso, a song!
 The taunting one that swept us into laughter!
 How runs it? did it not begin with Naples?
 (*Recalls it.*)

Naples sins and Torre pays,

(Torre del Greco!)

Who fears the earthquake all her days!

(Torre del Greco!)

Who

[*Forgets.*]

Who sits beneath Vesuvius

And shrives the castaways of us!

Naples sins and Torre pays,

(Torre del Greco!)

On, on with it! Come Porzia! — On, on!

Tasso (who has stood shrinking). Ah, Signor, no; I

fear; I cannot; pray

Your pardon. I must go.

Rizzio. Go!

Tasso. I would not
Offend the Church — who is the Bride of Christ.

Rizzio (unaffected). Then off with you, unworthy follower

Of Virgil,

And of fire-veined Ariosto, —

Of singers who have flung their hearts to courage,

As yet we shall fling ours! (*Tasso goes.*) For even

Bianca

And Osio

Must rue now their alarm,

And help us back from it to revelry.

[*As he turns to them, then to all.*]

What, none of you? no heart of joy about me?

Porzia (striving for abandon). Yes, Rizzio! . . .

tho I would have you fly;

For bodingly I breathe the breath of evil!

[*With forced lightness.*]

A dance, then!

Again weave its delight!

[*Dancers show cheer.*]

For to your want mine is attuned, and what
 Is music to it shall o'ermaster me!
 And not alone my feet shall follow, but
 The Truth you fly to will I wing to attain! —
 Tho stars seem to my simple sight but candles
 Upon the altar of God, I'll think them worlds,
 If to your soul they seem so; and for the rest —

[A knock brings consternation, this time to all.

*The dancers fall to crossing themselves,
 some kneeling. As they do so the gate
 is thrown open and Querio enters; he is
 followed by several guards.*

Querio (advancing; amid awe). In the name of
 the Vicar of God who sits at Rome,
 And of the Holy Office, I arrest
 The giver of these pagan rites and revels.

*[Guards step to Rizzio's side; he stands
 speechless.*

Porzia (stunned). Oh, . . . Oh!

Rizzio (hoarsely). And at whose urgency, my
 lord Prelate, *[Starts forward.*

I ask you at whose urgency this is done!
This deed of churchly duty! Yes, in justice
I seek; for there has been
Some traitor and perhaps a liar.— Osio?
Bianca? (*fiercely*) half, half I believe 't was you!

[*All are appalled.*

Porzia. No, no, Rizzio! . . . no! . . . what are
you saying!

[*Restrainingly.*

Will you requite injustice with a worse?

[*To Querio, who is unmoved.*

Monsignor, this in truth is hunting haste,
To search him out
Upon his wedding-day,
And bind him with the very wreaths of it!
Could you not wait an eve, a night, until
To-morrow when his nuptials would be o'er!

Querio. Who weds two brides is bigamist,
Signora.

When he divorces heresy accuse me.
But now say your farewells,

And with a moment's privacy: that can
I grant, that and no more: the rest's with Rome.

[Retires to rear — as do all but the two.]

Porzia (whom dread now begins to overwhelm).

My Rizzio! my own! I cannot bear it!

O why did you not go, delaying till

This fate has fallen

Now like a pall upon us!

I fear! I fear! . . .

To be so wedded, ere I am a wife,

Here in this city of dark lawless passions!

[Unrestrainedly.]

Ah, can you not recant?

Deny at once and so —

Rizzio: *Porzia!*

Porzia: *Nay!*

And yet to have you leave me —

Ere any nuptial night has hung our couch,

Ere I have lain beside you in the dark

And like Madonna dreamed of motherhood!

Ah, ah, I cannot!

Rizzio (with a thought). Then — listen to me.

[*Osio starts, watching him.*

I will return to you!

Porzia. Return?

Rizzio. Perchance.

It may be. For with florins to the guard —

With friendly gold —

May he not be persuaded

To bring me hither to you, for an hour

At midnight — tho it be but for an hour?

[*They look at each other.*

Querio (suspiciously, coming down). Enough,

Signor; the hour is running late.

And there are here, may be,

[*Sinisterly.*

Some who are avid now to be at vespers.

Porzia (embracing Rizzio). Then go, my lord;

farewell, and fear not for me,

Since I shall toil only for your release.

[*He goes, with Querio and guard. Porzia*

quails, then lets Marina lead her into

*the house. All follow but Bianca, Osio,
and Matteo at gate.*

Bianca (as the twilight begins, to Osio).

Now that you have achieved so much, what more?

*[He does not answer: she also turns into
house.]*

Osio (whom a turmoil of passions is tearing).

What more? . . . God in His Heaven shall de-
cide! . . .

Doubts have I had — like swine of hell within me —
But now He shall decide —

If she's to be the mother of heretics . . .

Or if I, who acclaim the Creed, shall have her!

[Calls.]

Matteo!

Matteo. Signor — *(advancing)* here.

Osio. You have done well.

And from to-night I take you to my service,
With wages that shall gild you from a want,
And with the benediction of the Church.
But there is one thing more:

Follow Monsignor Querio to the prison,
Then to Signora Porzia return —
And say her husband sent you
To bid her be in the bower there at midnight.

Matteo (staring). But Signor, will she come ?

Osio. Say that she is

To speak no word — but keep to silence: go.

*[With fixed face, when the latch clicks
behind him.]*

God shall decide, . . .

For if she does not know

My arms from *his*, then, it shall be a sign

That to them and my bed . . . she was predestined.

[The dark grows. He turns soon to go, and the curtain falls. . . . But rises again at once and it is midnight; with only dim lights from the silent, sleeping city. As it does so Porzia with Marina comes out of the house. They pause and listen, Marina half-anxiously.]

Porzia (drawing free). Return and have no fear,
he soon will come,
And bade me be alone there in the bower.
The night is like a spell to draw him to me.

Marina. Signora—!

Porzia. Like a spell of living love.

[*Crosses over, as one in a dream, and enters
the bower. Marina goes, the gate opens,
and Osio silently enters, coming down
into the bower amorously. A long si-
lence . . . then slowly the Curtain.*

ACT II

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A YEAR HAS ELAPSED

SCENE: *A sala, or hall, in the house of Rizzio. Its spacious walls and ceiling are frescoed with Virgilian scenes of a simpler and more beautiful kind than was usual to the decaying art of the period, and its high-arched open doors in the rear look out upon the terrace of Act I, toward the city, the Bay, Vesuvius — the whole magic curve of the haunting coast.*

Several antique terminal-statues, the bodies of which end strangely in their pedestals, stand on either side these doors, and about the hall a Venus and other rare objects of virtu recovered from the past are mingled with the furnishings of the room, which, arranged for joy and beauty, seems somehow sad when unoccupied, as now, tho the Neapolitan sun is shining brightly in from the blue.

An arrased doorway right leads thro a passage to the street gate, and one left to the pene-tralia of the house, from which Marina enters deeply troubled. She looks back, shakes her head, saying, "O my poor lady!" then crosses to door right, listens, and hearing nothing goes slowly to door rear, where she waits, singing sadly:

Shepherds down the mountain wind,
 Wild pipes play in the street.
 O Sicily, my Sicily,
 I long for thee, my Sweet!

Once a year God takes his joy,
 And that great joy is Spring,
 He weds earth clad in blossom-robcs,
 For His enrapturing!

[She stops, listening, then resumes:

Once a year God takes his joy,
 And that —

[She stops again hearing sounds at the gate, then is startled to paleness by the voice of Matteo; and as she listens a stern strong determination takes her.]

Matteo. Basta! am I to pass! son of a dog!
 Snout of a swine! knave! door-bestridding fool!
 Have I not matters to her from my master,
 To the Signora, from her husband's brother?

[A scuffle.]

The Devil's scullion feed you
 On flame, until your liver shrivels black!

[He has pushed past and enters the Hall insolently.]

O-hé! who 's here! I come from Signor Osio!

[Sees Marina.]

The little Sicilian? Luck then is my slave!

[Going to her.]

Well, pretty fig! my little red pomegranate!
 My fair forbidden fruit — pluckt in the moon!
 I've come . . . *(stopped by her mien)* But,

Blood of the Holy Sepulchre!

Looks around uncertainly.

What thing has happened here?

Marina.

That, Matteo,

[Speaks solemnly.

Which yet I do not know, and which I pray

Madonna you may be as ignorant of.

Matteo. Eh? . . . I, my beauty?

Marina. You — who left this house

A year ago to-night with Signor Osio,

Left suddenly,

To serve his wealth and pleasure,

And who will leave it now as instantly,

If he is not in need — of absolution.

Matteo. Of . . . *(starting)* absolution?

Body, now, of Bacchus!

Does he not go to the Mass — and if he does

not

Am I a priest

To know his need of purging?

Or if he sins must I be damned with him?

Marina. No, so the way from it —

Matteo. The way! the way!

I want no way, but in unto your mistress.

Am I not sent here to her with commands?

Ecco! and must I turn with them upon me,

And say a wench denied me?

Or that I feared

Perchance to catch the fever

Of heresy your master's shackled with?

Pah, but you jest, my ruby rose of Aetna —

[*Insinuatingly.*]

Whom yet I will not say but I will wed,

Tho you are from that Paynim-breeding isle

Of Sicily. You jest: so, in with you.

I seek your lady.

Marina. Seek . . . and shall find more

Matteo. More! (*Struck by her tone.*) And from
what and whom?

Marina. I wait Aloysius,

The leech.

Matteo. And that is what I am to fear?

Marina. The child is ill.

Matteo (startling). The child!

Marina. My lady's child.

[*With tensesr solemnity.*

For there has come of late into her mind

A dread that has dried life within her breasts.

Matteo (who pales). And am I God, woman, to
keep dread from her?

Marina. Tending to it a strangeness comes upon
her,

And with the sudden seizure of it, fear —

Shudders of horror, instincts of some evil

That she somehow has suffered, or committed —

[*Pauses*

Matteo (paler). What do you mean!

Marina: As one within a trance.

Matteo. And do you mean — ?

Marina: A mood seizes her flesh

That creeps against her will whene'er unto her

The little one is pressed.

Matteo (trembling). This is a lie!

Marina. She cannot look upon it, but with
terror,
That brings remorse
Awakening more terror!
The blight of heresy, she strives to think
Of her lord's heresy is sent upon her,
Or of her own refusal, it may be,
To wed the Convent, not the carnal world.

Matteo. To you she said this?

Marina. Ah! and Madonna! her sleep!
She walks with eyes wide open.

Matteo. I say you lie.
You do! as if Eternity were not,—

[*Seizes her wrist.*

To frighten me and Signor Osio!

Marina (coldly, stingingly). And yet you understand? ha, understand?
And hoarsely stare at words upon my lips
That should be meaningless as moony madness?
You penetrate
What not the Pope himself,

Nor any could, but with a guilty knowledge?
 There's villainy I say, and you are in it,
 The tool of a blind villain, who should be
 Where now his brother rots, but that the Church
 Is no more Christ's!

Ah, ah! my nails could tear
 Your hated false caresses from my flesh,
 Your kisses from my memory and fling them
 Upon your wicked heart. And, for your master,
 The Virgin strangle him! She — or another!

[Meaningly.]

Another!

Matteo (startled). What? what say you?

Marina. That — one — will!

For do not think such sins go unavenged.

[Starts to go.]

Matteo. I say, what do you hint! Stand! there
 is more!

[Seizes her and clasps her to him.]

More! and I'll have it, by the crater of Hell!

More — and your lips shall tell it with a kiss.

Marina. Off me! (*Struggling.*) And if you do
not get from here —

[*Breaks free.*

Before Signora Bianca —

Matteo. Ah! Ahi!

It has to do then with the Florentine?

Who is as pagan as that devil Venus,

[*Points to statue.*

Yet prates to priests as subtly as my master

Who will not play Love with her?

By the Passion and Blood of God, has she again

Gone jealous to Monsignor Querio,

To get undone the doors of the Inquisition,

So that your master . . . ? has she?

Marina. They are open! —

O would I who o'erheard might tell my lady! —

And Signor Rizzio goes free to-day!

Free to return here unto his own home!

Free to cast from him a year's ignorance,

A year's imprisonment beyond the pale

Of any word or message

And learn how on his wedding-day when he
 Was seized and on his wedding-night when he
 Expected to return. . . . At that you quail?
 Begone then, or —

Matteo (gnashing). The jealousy of women!
 Their hearts are devil-pots that ever boil.—
 But this is cud for Signor Osio,
 So get you in at once unto your mistress
 And say —

Enter BIANCA suddenly in agitation

Bianca (looking about, with alarm). Where is my
 cousin? (*Calls*) Porzia! Porzia! —
 She must return at once — unto the child:
 Her mood is perilous and must be pent.

[*As they stare.*]

Did you not see her? (*Impatient.*) Am I Proser-
 pine
 To make such gaping ghosts of you? I say,
 Was she not here?

Marina. Signora — ?

Bianca. She hung, haunted,
[Searching again.

By the child's cradle — there a little since,
 But suddenly rose up and fled from it,
 Saying — she would wed death!

Marina. Wed death! Signora!

Bianca. Yes; I was near. Her words — that
 struck me stark.

I could not speak. Do you know aught of this,
 You who have seen these dark distractions in her?
 Or does this . . . drone of Signor Osio?

[Toward Matteo.

What brings him here?

Matteo. Marina there.

Bianca. Ha, yes! *[At door rear.*

The honey from that flower — but what else?

[At door right.

Marina, yes, for you have been with her
 Too often under the moon, but there is more
 Behind you than yourself. Your master has
 Not sent you?

Matteo. Yes, Signora. To your beauty
 He sends salute; and to your lady cousin
 Who . . . O Signora, see! (*staring*) upon the terrace!

[*He has broken off awestruck.*

See, see! Oh, in her hand there is . . . Oh! — oh!

[*They turn and behold Porzia trancedly approaching, a stiletto before her and her lips moving obliviously.*

Porzia. And should I not, Madonna, if . . . O
 should I?

Would you in heaven not assuage and shrive me?

Make the wound seem as holy as were Christ's?

Miraculously make —

Bianca. Porzia!

Porzia. Make — (*dazed*)

Bianca. Porzia, do you dream!

Porzia (startled). Bianca! (*dropping blade*) You?

[*A pause.*

Bianca. This speech to weapons! this distraction.

What

And whence and why is it? Your child —

Porzia (*quickly*).

Yes, yes! . . .

[*A little incoherent.*

I went into the garden to wait Aloysius,
My uncle Aloysius, who is a leech.
I have not slept. . . . What is it I am saying?

[*Seeing Matteo.*

Is that one come to tell —

Bianca.

He is the servant —

Of Osio.

Porzia (*with recoil*). Of Osio? . . . Of Osio?

[*Trembling.*

Matteo. Signora, yes. He sends me with a
message.

He begs that he may see you.

Porzia.

See?

Matteo.

Implores

That this strange shrinking from him and aversion,
This pale . . . and unintelligible . . . repulsion
You have of late —

Porzia. Go back to him! go, go!

[*Struggling: with solemn abhorrence.*

And say I cannot see him. He is my brother,
My husband's brother,
Whom I pray to honor.

And is much like my husband:

A likeness that unreasonably, it may be,
I shudder to look upon: and yet —

Matteo.

He bade me

To say, Signora, nothing must prevent;

That it concerns —

Porzia.

See him I will not, ever!

[*With utter repugnance.*]

And cannot and should not tho he sought me in
That time which lies beyond eternity,
That space which is beyond the brink of all.
What thing it is haunting his heart I know not.
But in his presence all my flesh becomes
A shudder of horror,
All my soul a fear.
My husband's brother is he, my poor husband's,
But he. . . . Go, go! . . . and tell him that strange
drawings

And strange repulsions pass the hearts of those

Whom grief has gathered upon; and that I who
Upon my wedding-day had torn from me —

[*Suddenly, uncontrollably.*

Say, say I would he were not on the earth!

Bianca (amazed, suspicious): Porzia! what is this!

Porzia. I know not: go!

[*He goes, then Marina, fearful. An over-
fraught pause.*

Bianca (at length, jealously). For this there is a
reason — and but one.

You love, you love him!

Porzia. Love . . . whom?

Bianca. Osio!

Yet dare not so you draw him with denials,
Knowing that to repel is to entrain him.

[*As Porzia stares, stupefied.*

O mockery of it! fools my eyes were, fools,
That stood within my head and did not see!
To me he spoke of love — yearning for you,
And in me heard but echoes of you . . . ever!
Yet, since you loved him,

Why unto his brother,
 A heretic o'erturning God with stars,
 Did you —

Porzia (sinking to a divan). I pray you speak
 things possible,

Tho to your sight I seem and to my own
 Like one unnatural beyond belief!
 A child I have whom fever now is burning,
 A husband all unhallowed in a prison . . .
 Tho to my dreams last night he seemed to come.

[*Bianca starts.*

And so you must forgive me if blind shrinkings,
 That to your sight seem semblances of love,
 Unhelpably o'ertake me.

Bianca. Then — confess

Why Osio seeks you and why so you shun him?
 And with the child why are your ways so wild?
 You fear sometimes to touch it,
 As if it were another's, or at your breast
 Could only drink of horror.

Porzia (rising). Ah! . . . ah, ah!

Bianca: Love is it, love, I say, of Osio,
That motherhood itself cannot amend,
And Rizzio shall hear of it — this day.

Porzia. He . . . there in the darkness . . .
can hear naught!

Leave me, I pray, to wait Aloysius.

Why comes he not? . . . Ah, and why do you rend
me?

For you would not indeed to Rizzio
Add demon doubts . . .

Of me who am to him there in the night
Sun, moon and the white galaxy of stars
Such as not even Messer Bruno dreams. . . .

For, if you would, are you indeed Bianca
Who, as a child, sang with me under the olives
And cypresses; or watched with wonder eyes
The fisherman draw marvels from the deep,
Then homeward wing at eve to Ischia?
I cannot think it! . . . yet . . . !

[*Again distraught.*]

O what is it I dread! what thing has changed

All natural thoughts within me to repugnance,
 All instincts and desires into terror?
 I cannot touch my flesh, but I turn cold
 As if I had touched pollution, cannot press
 My child unto my breasts, but . . . true,
 Oh, true! . . .

A madness whispers in me, "Take it away!"

[Staring, hauntedly.]

And too, and too . . . in solitude the want
 Of Rizzio imprisoned comes to me;
 Yet when I reach for him I seem enclasped
 By unknown arms . . . in the sere dark, that . . .
 Oh!

Now, now I feel them! off! *[A knock at the gate.]*

(Starting) Ah, ah, Aloysius! . . .

With healing! he at last! *(moving toward door)*

Uncle, the child —

[Stops rooted to the floor for Osio has suddenly entered. He does not speak, nor she but only Bianca, who looks at them uttering his name then turning goes.]

Osio (at length, tortured). You shut me from your
presence and your doors,
My messages return to me unopened,
My messengers unhonored — yet I've come,
For speak to you I must, and utterly!

Porzia (gazing). Lord Jesu!

Osio. Ai, Lord Jesu! let Him hear!
For if ever He huddled in a Manger,
Or hung, a red atonement, on the Cross —
If you are not soul-bound to heresy,
You must. . . .

Porzia. Oh, oh! why are you here?

Osio. Why? . . . Peace!
Can you not listen to me without terror
Not look upon me
Without eyes where awe
Sits like a murdered thing, or without hands
That flutter at your heart unfalteringly?
I am your brother.

Porzia. I . . . will hold you so.

Osio. But more than sister are you to my breast.

Porzia. Ah!

Osio. More, and I would save you from the
flames

That bind you to a heretic and Hell.

Nay, stay! do not start from me; stay, do not!

But hear me, for not that alone has led me,

Not that alone,

But love unbearable —

Such as not any lips in all the world

Have sung, or any famed for it have breathed

Upon the pagan pages of a book:

For they were heathen all, in penance now

Upon the sulphur winds that sweep Inferno,

While I —

Porzia (whose look stops him). While, you, you,
inordinate,

Speak baseness so unto your brother's wife?

Osio. His, no! no more! no more! for heresy
Has rent from him all rights, therefore I dare
To hunger for you, and to pledge the Pope
Will grant us dispensation —

Porzia. Oh! Oh, oh!

[Overwhelmed with loathing.

Osio. You will not heed it, will not come with me?

Porzia. Madonna, wash his words out of my brain,

[Her hands lifted.

And from my memory purge their pollution!

(To him) Go, go! . . .

And may the poison of you never pass

Across my sight again.

Osio. It will — to save you,

For mine you are — God wills it! — and . . . have been!

Porzia. Oh!

Osio. Have! — it was predestined — by His breath.

Was he to see you mate a heretic,

Or from your body spring the Anti-Christ?

A year ago you wedded one, and I

Was ready with the hands of the Inquisition.

Porzia. Rizzio?

Osio. Out of prison?

[*As she gazes at him.*

I tell you the child is mine! for Rizzio
Returned not to you. Mine, mine, and you must
Protect it and yourself.

Porzia. From — ? . . . do you mean?

O do you mean that he may come? that you
Expect him, O and soon? and that Bianca —?

Osio. I mean no mysteries, but that the child
Is mine —

And you may be —

And all be well.

Porzia. But he will come? you have some in-
timation?

Some waft of his release, some prescience?

But say it and I will forgive you all!

Say that my arms once more shall clasp him to me!

Say that my heart once more shall beat to his!

Say that my eyes once more shall drink the dawn

From his, and I —

Osio. Be still. For if you will not
 Now, now be mine, one thing must be assured
 Beyond the sway of peril:
 It must be kept from him there is a child.

Porzia. Never! but I will lay it in his arms,
 Unto the cradle of his bosom bring it —
 While I have hands of purity to lift it —
 And —

Osio. Have him fling it forth? Hush! what is
 here?

*[A knocking at the gate: amazed cries: then
 Rizzio's voice.]*

Porzia. Rizzio! Rizzio! Rizzio!

Rizzio (without). Porzia! Porzia!

*[He enters, weak and worn, in tattered
 raiment, and comes down to where she
 gazes too overcome to embrace him.]*

Rizzio. My Porzia! (*With a clasp.*) O do I look
 upon you,
 Not on some prison vision that will vanish
 Between my arms to nothingness of air?

Some wan and hollow haunting of the night?
 Look up into my soul and speak to me
 With eyes that are incarnate songs of love!
 Ah, what, you cannot?
 The swiftness of my coming has undone you?

Porzia. No, no!

Rizzio. Then give reality to dreams,
 Linking your lips to mine! . . . Oh, oh! at last!
 At last I know I live
 And am more than
 A madness in miasmatic night immured!
 And that eternity of want can end —
 Upon your breast — within this house where —
 (*Seeing Osio*) You?

[*With inexplicable antagonism.*]

Osio. I . . . and I have no welcome for you,
 knowing
 That heresy is still hot in your heart.

Rizzio. For which you with accursèd joy are
 glad? . . .

[*Osio goes rankling into garden.*]

What does he here, my Porzia? what does he?

[*Troubled.*

Has he been much with you? Sometimes there in
My fetters I have fought strange dreams of him,
Battled against him as against a brood
Of elemental horrors and contagion.

Yet when I would awake —

Porzia (clinging fearfully). My Rizzio! . . .

Rizzio. Ai, yours! when hope was darkest, when
the links

Of wolfish steel were feeding on my bone.

[*Holds out wrists.*

Or like a python wound me as I slept.

Porzia. The pity of my heart and lips shall heal
them. [With caresses.

Rizzio. They and the passion of you, and the
peace

And beauty of your body and your soul,

That were torn from me at the very altar,

But now — purer for waiting — shall be mine.

Porzia (trembling). Yes, yes, Rizzio!

Rizzio.

Say, say it again!

For oh, the jealous fears that have defiled me,
The visions I have called a lie in vain,
The hot hands I have seen laid on your beauty!

[To her look of helplessness.

O say it! for you gaze — as if you could not!
As if . . . O what is wringing you! You can
Not say it — that no arms but mine have held you,
No lips but mine have ever lingered, ever —?

*[A pitiful cry of distress breaks from within,
then a hurry of feet and Marina rushes
on anguished.*

Marina. My lady! O my lady! . . . the child!
the child!

Porzia (swaying). What is it? Speak!

Marina. My lady, it is dead! *[A wild pause.*

Porzia. Dead? dead? my child? my little one?
my own?

My baby? . . . Oh; oh, oh! . . . oh, oh, oh, oh!

*[She stretches her arms distractedly before
her and goes.*

Rizzio (who has staggered, dazed, and is frenziedly realizing). God, God, the madness . . . is this then the madness. . . .

At last! . . .

Her child? her child? and I — never a husband?

She has a child and I am childless! I! . . .

Have I been tricked, beaten, betrayed, undone,

Duped by a lie of low inconstancy.

[To Marina.

Speak, quean!

Marina. O sir, I know not what to say!

Rizzio. Tho' truth bays wild, fool-face!

Marina. Sir, sir, I cannot!

But hold, I pray you! for she is . . . she . . . Ah!

[Has cried out, for the curtains have parted and Porzia is entering — the dead child in her arms, her eyes gazing sightlessly.

Rizzio (who looks at her, racked, laughs wildly, then rushes to door). At last, at last the heretic's in Hell!

[Breaks past Aloysius entering, and is gone.

Marina (to the leech). O Signor Aloysius, my
poor, poor lady! [Weeping.

My lady! O what now, what now shall heal her!

Aloysius. Go in, prepare her bed, and I will bring
her.

In, in, I say! (*as she goes; to the mother*) Porzia!

[Gently.

[*She does not answer.*

Come, Porzia!

Porzia. Yes, yes; is the grave ready?

Then let the clod fall softly, and the shroud

Not wake him, for he sleeps. And let there be

Some orange blossoms too . . . some orange
blossoms!

[*She permits him to lead her in, still gazing
before her*

CURTAIN.

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ACT III

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NIGHT OF THE NEXT DAY

SCENE: *The terrace of Act I, but lit wanly now by the moon, whose sheen is cast like a pall over the city and kindles the Bay to quivering silver. Thro the open door of the house and from the window of Porzia's chamber which is just above the image of the Virgin, light falls streaming toward the Pan and toward the deeply shadowed bower. A stone seat is set to the front centre.*

Osio, haunted and desperate, stands without the bower, watching Matteo who is stealthily coming down from the pedestal of the Virgin where he has climbed to listen, and who crosses the terrace to him.

Osio. Her words! give me her words — and them alone!

What were they?

Matteo. I could learn no more, Signor.
The fever is tossing her.

Osio. To peril of death?
She is sinking now down into ceaseless Hell,
Where he shall follow?
Is swooning low to it?
And to eternal flame?

Matteo. I do not know.
But burningly she sleeps. (*Uneasily.*) Shall we
not go? [*Looks around.*]
For if we here are found —

Osio. They have not brought her
The Sacrament?

Matteo. No priest is there, Signor.

Osio: The child, she asks for it?

Matteo. I seemed to hear
Signora Bianca say that since the morning
When it was borne in secret to the tomb
She has not.
But still her moan's of Signor Rizzio,
Who has not yet returned, tho still they seek him.

Osio (bitterly). Her blood be on his head! upon
his head!

And not on mine, that has not swayed to schism,
If death is calling now for her damnation.

No, I am pure of it!

Matteo.

But should he come?

[Again looks around.]

Osio. I'll fear him not. Never! For odium
It were to God that I a moment should —
Him black with unbelief!
But come he will not . . . since he left deluded.
Or if he should a voice has pledged to me
Full absolution if —

Matteo.

What, Signor?

Osio.

Peace!

He will not. So again mount up!

Matteo (unwillingly).

Signor!

Osio. Mount, mount, and strain the most to
get me more.

*[Matteo loathly crosses and again ascends
the pedestal. But scarcely has done*

*so when a knock comes at the gate.
He steps down into the shadow of the
image — Osio into bower. Then Marina
appears from the house hesitantly.*

Marina. Who knocks? Signor Aloysius, is it
you?

Aloysius. Ai, ai! and weary: open!

[Being admitted.

This day! this day!

The search till he was found; and then the toil —
The patient physic poured
Vainly it seemed unto the proud or poor.

[Taking off medicine pouch.

But it at last is done. Now, the relief —
He came reluctant? and to her outpoured
A lava of wild purpose and revenge
When he was told?

Marina. He? (*staring*) Signor Rizzio?
You have not brought him?

Aloysius. Brought? Is he not here?

Marina (dismayed). Signor!

Aloysius. But how? but how? (*dropping pouch.*) Not he? and Bruno?

Who had been with him,
Whom he had but left
To search, sudden it seemed, for Osio?
Not Bruno! whom I pledged to find and lead him
Here to her — since we learned that Osio
Has fled from Naples?

Marina. Signor, neither! none!
[Involuntarily.

O he must come, or she will die!

Aloysius. . . . Die? . . .

Marina. New evils gather ever in vendetta!

Aloysius. You run from them too rapidly to death,
Which comes but when it will — and not from sleep
In which I left her.

Marina. But her sleep has grown
To fever that has flowed into her brain!
Her heart is full of moans,
Her lips of murmurs!
She tore the crucifix from off her neck

And flung it from her, saying that it was
The arms of Osio; and then cried out
That she was virgin and immaculately
Had borne a child, that now was laid in the tomb,
But should arise again. Then would she start
And say there is no God, but only stars,
But stars, a heaven of stars! For which Signora
Bianca ignorant arose and chid her.

Aloysius. And all unduly did! This must be
stayed,

Not made immedicable.

Go in; prepare the herbs that I left with you.

*[She goes — as he stands pondering — past
Bianca, who enters.]*

Bianca (pausing, then with resolute bitterness).

So you have come and have not brought him?

Well,

The insult of this secrecy must end,

The shrouding and affronting soil of it.

I'll sift in doubt no more, but have the truth.

Aloysius. Signora?

Bianca. O, fatality's in the world,
 From atom to infinity it may be,
 But there is also sinning. Which is this?
 And whence is it
 If she though sunk in sleep
 Says ever "I must go into the bower!"
 And ever with elusive lips "the bower!"
 Whom would she meet?

Aloysius. The bower?

Bianca. Whom! or if
 No guilt is in her why this grievous haunting?

Aloysius. I will go to her.

Bianca (angrily). So to evade confessing?
 To avoid granting
 That it is Osio?
 That it is he has been her paramour?
 That he it is has plundered her with passion —
 Whose proof is the child
 Which Heaven has struck dead?
 Will go? Nor first deny
 That rightly Rizzio has turned from her

And now perchance is seeking Osio —

[Breaks off, for the gate opens and Rizzio slowly enters. A deadly purpose is on him as he looks around.]

Rizzio (at length). You clothe my thought,
 Bianca, in the flesh
 Of speech that I have shunned: but we shall
 know —

Soon know, for I have tracked him to this gate.

[To Aloysius, solemnly.]

Where is he?

Aloysius (amazed). He? . . . Osio?

Rizzio. So! reveal him!

Aloysius. But — this is error! . . . he is gone
 from Naples!

Rizzio. Or wrapped in lies is hidden here for her?
 By the very God of the world, I say —

(With restraint.) But . . . no!

Aloysius. And “no” until you trust it! For
 her fate

Is not as you suppose.

Rizzio. Nor his? Nor he!

This bigot whose religion's lechery?

This monk to whom licentiousness is God?

This monster I illimitably loathe?

[*Searching as he speaks.*

I say that he is here; that I will find him;

That I have tracked him to you, and . . . (*suddenly*) Aha!

[*Discovers Matteo under Image.*

Aha! from Naples he is gone? from Naples?

[*Drawing Matteo forth.*

But leaves his shadow here?

Matteo (terrified). Signor! Signor!

[*Cringes.*

Rizzio. From Naples he is sped, but at the feet
Of the Virgin he adores drops this devotion?

[*Slowly, terribly.*

Unpitable toad — of filth begotten!

Pander who should go down into the Pit

And be the go-between of burning lusts,

Where lurks he?

Matteo. Signor! (*chokes*) Signor! I will show.
 You shall have all; but let me live, Signor.
 I have a father crippled who would starve
 But for the gold I get
 And she, Signora Porzia's innocent.

Rizzio. And virgin too! with that obliteration
 You'll clothe her! Heaven's Queen, do I not
 know
 What Nature and conception are!

Aloysius (trembling). Ai, so!
 And of them there is no denial here.
 That she has given birth, herself has told you,
 Herself The child *was* hers, but —

Rizzio. Born of miracles
 And of imaginations and of dreams?
 Is this Judea
 And a day divine,
 Not Italy and unregeneration,
 Where God deposes the world to Borgias?
 The father of it was he — he and no other!

Aloysius. But in her innocence she —

Rizzio. Yielded! Yielded!
And clung to him as the harlot moon to earth.

Aloysius. No, no!

Rizzio. Thro nights and nights!

Aloysius. Never; but duped
And unaware she took his arms for yours,
Believed, tho by yon moon, I know not how,
Unless she was entranced,
That you had come to meet her in the bower,
And —

MARINA enters suddenly terrified

Marina. Signor! Signor Aloysius! O quick!
O come to her! She has arisen!

Aloysius. Risen!

Marina. O, in her sleep! and will not to her bed
Return, but says with eyes empty of sight
That it is time ——

Aloysius. For what?

Marina (hesitant, distressed). To . . . meet him in
The bower!

Aloysius (quickly). I will come to her.

Rizzio (burningly). Ah! ah!

[Starts before him.

And drug her now with opiates to prevent her?

Or waken her and bid her to deny?

Did I not deem it? and will you feign further?

Did I not say that Osio is here?

There in the bower is he, there! and she

Has planned to meet him.

Marina. Signor! no! no, no!

'Tis you that she would meet!

Rizzio. And not this croucher,

[Of Matteo.

Who is alone and purposeless? not he?

Nor him he pledges craven to reveal?

Marina. O, Signor, no!

Rizzio. Lies! and a world of lies!

[His words writhing.

And now you shall not hold her: she shall come:

Shall go into the bower. She shall take him

Before your very breath unto her breast.

Marina. But, Signor, she is asleep.

Rizzio. Go, lead her.

Marina. She

Knows not what she is doing!

Rizzio. She shall learn!

Marina. O Signor, no, no, no!

Rizzio. I tell you, then,
[Starting toward house.

That truth is still my star, and that no shrinking
Shall stay me, tho all night contains would quench
it.

*[Is near door, when Porzia herself like
a wraith appears — and at the same
time Osio is seen in the entrance to
bower. Before Porzia's sleep-fixed eyes
Rizzio falls back: her somnambulant
speech breaks faintly.*

Porzia. The night is as a spell. No more of
physic.

Return unto your couch. The Inquisition?
To take him? from his very nuptials take him?

He is no bigamist, Monsignor Querio. [Pauses.

Yes, Rizzio, at midnight! . . . Yes. — Ever

The arms of Osio round me instead!

This choking shroud of fever that defiles!

[Moans, trying to throw it off.

But, peace; the child will wake. My little one,

My baby! . . . lift the candle to its face.

[Again moaning.

O that is Osio, not Rizzio,

I see within its eyes! Yet do not kill him,

No, Rizzio, do not kill him, tho he is

Your brother and has done it: I have borne

Too much and they would prison you again.

Or if they did not, still the stars we love

Must not turn into . . . drops of bloody ven-
geance! —

But, peace to this! (*moves forward*) for it is time
to meet him.

Marina (*withholdingly*). Signora!

Porzia. Time to meet him in the bower.

[*Is nearing it.*

For now he is returned and all the night
Is like a spell to draw my soul unto him.

[With Osio before her.

Yes, Rizzio, I come; you see, I . . . I . . .

*[Is reaching her arms to him when a shudder
takes her. Her hand goes up to her
brow and her gaze wanly flutters.
Then suddenly her trance breaks and
she shrinks screaming:*

It is not he! not Rizzio! Not he!

Marina! Bianca! Help! not he! help, help!

[Sinks wildly back to the seat.

Marina (who runs to her). Signora, no! not he!
not he! but we

Are here and he is come and you shall see him.

[Kneeling.

See, you have dreamed! . . .

Aloysius (by her). And have awakened, Por-
zia,

Awakened from imaginings and terrors;

For you are ill. . . .

Marina. And knew not what you did! . . .
But now look round you and all shall be well.

*[She looks and, finding Rizzio, rises again
bewildered.]*

Marina (who understands). It now is he, Signora;
do not fear.

Porzia. Rizzio! Rizzio! Rizzio!

Rizzio.

Porzia!

[He sobs.]

Porzia. O, is it dreams? I pray do not deceive
me.

I think that it is he, but O so many
My thoughts have been and full of pain to me
That truth shall never more, alas, be true,
Or trust be ever utter trust again
'Till peace has come to me as pure as that
To earth, from the rainbow's woven amulet
Upon the brow of God — peace wed to kindness.
And to deceive me now were less than kind!

Rizzio. My Porzia! *(Falls weeping at her feet.)*

Deceit at last is o'er!

And not he, even he, who wrought this wrong
And who would forge that rainbow into fetters,
Till I could wish

The eternal tooth of pain

And of remorse should tear him — not he, now,

[*Rising; to Osio.*

Shall turn my heart from love unto revenge,

But “pagan” tho I be, I bid him go!

[*Points to gate, and Osio tortured, flings it open — and goes. Then when Matteo has followed, Rizzio turns tenderly to Porzia. The horror falls from her as he folds her finally to him — while the moon that had clouded, shines on them bright and still.*

THE END

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