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PSYCHE:

An Unfinished Fragment

BY

EVAN MORGAN

OXFORD

BASIL BLACKWELL

1920



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I HUMBLY DEDICATE THIS BOOK TO THE MEMORY OF
ALL THOSE OF MY REGIMENT WHO HAVE
PERISHED IN THE GREAT WAR; AND
AS A SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE TO
MINE OWN PERSONAL FRIENDS



FOREWORD

IN the spring of 1916 I first conceived the idea of writing the legend of Cupid and Psyche in verse, and by the end of June in that year had accomplished Book I of the intended four books planned in the primary schedule. The autumn and winter witnessed the beginning of Book II and a couple of episodes from Book III, which was to have been employed in the description of Psyche's trials and tribulations whilst suffering under the jealous displeasure of Venus ; however, ill-health combined with duties military and political intervened, and when at length a sufficient period of time was at my disposal for the further continuance of my poetic labours, namely during the summer of 1918, the first inspiration and incentive had forsaken me, and I felt that any additional work expended on its completion would, lacking the spirit which had inspired its proemial inception, ring false and merely degenerate into an obvious effort steadfastly to maintain the primal atmosphere of its initial impulse.

I then sent the work to several friends in the world of letters, and submitted it to the readers of two prominent publishing houses, only to receive the same reply from each, which when put concisely but came to this : " Finish it, and send it to us again."

But now I can never finish it ; and in the hopes that some may find a certain pleasure in reading over one or two of its passages, with much diffidence I hand it to the public, and the merciless talons of the critics, as a broken fragment worthy only of a casual perusal on a rainy day.

I would not have even dared so much if it had not been for the sympathetic encouragement of its present editor, Mr. Earp, to whom I had the pleasure of reading the original copy and in whose rooms at Oxford much of Book II was composed. He, on the eve of my departure for this country, very kindly and generously suggested that, despite its uneven and incomplete state, he would be willing to send it to the present publisher : I took advantage of his suggestion.

And so I would beg you not too unkindly to take up this little volume into your hands and let your impatience of its blatant imperfections pass as lightly over it as a summer's evening breeze glides over a reedy pond, barely ruffling the tranquillity of its surface.

EVAN MORGAN.

Colorado Springs, U.S.A.
November 1919.

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PSYCHE

THE LEGEND

DIVINITY AND DISCONTENT

A KING, a palace, royal daughters three :
Two of whom shone in beauty's golden dye.
Two richer gems, indeed, 'twere hard to see,
Howe'er much beauty schooled the human eye.
Yet see completion of this trinity,
This triple constellation's fairest star !
If Faith and Hope the twain, then Charity
Doth all the fruits of beauty calendar.
For in her lines of sinless symmetry
Is beauty's worth revealed and fully paid
Scarce earthly seeming, such simplicity
Of loveliness pervades the virgin maid.
And fire, not blood, might well have fed her veins,
And gods for parents not too proud a boast.
Her amber hair outgleamed Apollo's reins,
She was both Beauty and yet Beauty's ghost :

Too frail her freshness for earth's fleshly seed,
No fruit she seemed of mortals' love-embrace,
But as the dew from heaven, benignly freed,
A fairy fallen from some fabled place :
The iridescence of the sleepless rill,
The flickering fancy of the soft spring wind,
The radiance of ephemerals that fill
The sunset skies, did this child's beauty bind.
Arms, like snow marble cooled in moonlit rays,
Hands, where the vine-blood flows beneath the bloom,
Feet, chiselled only for celestial ways,
Skin, from peach petals spun on elfin loom,
Shoulders, that dimmed the evening fireflies,
Two milky doves soft white as flowering pear,
Whilst melting snowflakes tinged of breaking skies
By her fair neck did not as fair appear.
What tongue may speak the glories of her head ?
Perfection featured in each feature lay
From moon's clear deeps her dreaming eyes were fed,
Nor paled their lustre in resplendent day :
Her mouth fell parted, a fresh, fragrant bud
Bursting to bloom on rare exotic tree,
Upon her lip, red fuchsia spilled his blood
With crimson rose and painted peony.
Crescent her brows, black nocturne-vaulted ark
Holding high heaven to the curving sky,
Figured triumphal arches set to mark
Beauty's victorious modelling of the eye.

If goddess born, then Venus must she be,
If mortal, then immortal in her form,
Except the winds and waters did agree
A child to loose on Eve's tranquillity.
No words as these may ever give the clue
To but the shadow of her peerless grace,
The limning of it was for earth too true—
Perfected things all human laws efface.
What wonder then that hungry rumours spread
From West to East, from North to Southern clime,
That people from the furthest regions sped
To see this beauty, fabled through all time.
And many a pilgrim sailor from the sea
Voyaged unto the city of the King
To gaze dumbfounded on divinity,
To whom afore his reverent hands did bring
Gifts, that his passage o'er the fleecy foam
Might all in safety lie, and he might run
With favouring breezes back unto his home
When all his charted course lay fully done.
So swift the fame of this her splendour sped
That travellers, voyaging from distant lands,
Changed their prescriptive course, this godlihead
To see, to hear, to touch with their own hands.
“ 'Tis Venus, fresh outrisen from the wave !
In mortal flesh perceive the stone and wood !
For surety, this is the goddess, save
She has most strangely kept her virginhood ! ”

Thus was it rumoured and thus all believed,
Viewing her spotless and unblemished form,
That ne'er of mortal womb was such conceived,—
This star of Eve, this maiden deiform !
Whereat, throughout the regions far and wide
Undecked were Cypris' altars, rest of care,
Lords, lovers, ladies, all to Psyche hied,
And in their open palms some gift did bear.
Whene'er abroad she moved, the people cast
Roses before her, lest her dazzling feet
Should touch the dusty way, and as she passed
With godly titles did her progress greet.
Doves leashed in roses, silk-teamed butterflies
Down fluttered on her, loosed from door and roof,
Incense, and balms, and gifts of greater prize
Littered her path ; adding yet proof to proof
How many a country worshipped her divine,
Deeming her spirit of the postured stone
To whom, erstwhile, had smoked the slaughtered kine,
And jilted lover made his passioned moan.
Thus naked stood the altars of the Queen,
Queen of Desire, great Aphrodite named.
The wreaths that once each day were fresh and green
Piled powdered dust ; no longer incense flamed
Before the sinuous curvatures of white
And marble limbs, voluptuously smooth,
Fair image of the Mother of Delight
In garnished temple, grove, and vine-hung booth.

Anon the One Superb, the One Sublime,
 Advised the world had fled her for a child,
 Blossom of mortal wedlock ; saw how time
 Her houses emptied and her groves defiled,
 Damaged her statues, her utensils bent,
 And of all offerings robbed the Altar-place ;
 Then was her woman's heart by malice rent,
 Seeking some means the forger to abase.
 Fierce did the hate that woman bears her sex
 Burn out her heart, eat deep into her soul,
 Whilst Jealousy did whisper means to vex
 This sister decked in beauty's aureole.
 " Am I to brook such slight upon my name ?
 Impertinence directed at my pride ?
 This mimic counter-worship with its shame
 Poured out upon me ; how shall I abide,
 Neglected, spurned in garths, in glades, in shrines,
 Flouted, ignored, decayed my royal state ? "
 Hand furrows hand, calm brow dissolves in lines
 The white pearls bared, gleam out in jealous hate.
 " More beauteous I, and e'er shall be than she !
 Wondrously woman, fearful queen of man !
 Yea, that am I ! then ever let me be
 Victorious still—or perish in the van
 Of winged avenging armies of my fate !
 This slut shall feel it is no easy task
 To rob a goddess of her lawful state,
 And in the borrowed smiles of heaven bask,

This earth-born stripling ! that all passion lacks !
This sick and delicate, pale forgery of love,
Jove ! Make her suffer, she and all those packs
Of moonstruck, doting fools who round her move !
Yet rival scarce is she—no weed flouts flower,
No candle glimmers prouder than the day,
No minute may out-time the haughty hour,
Nor puddle hold more sky than seas display.”
She, meditating Psyche’s future death,
To Cupid comes—love’s terrible avenger—
Into his ears outpours her panting breath,
Bidding him punish beauty’s challenger.

Meantime the King in melancholy sits,
Forebodings of hid evils cloud his heart :
Two daughters as their breeding well befits
Each at a prince’s court holds wifely part.
But no man has of Psyche asked her hand,
And no man cares to lift his eyes and gaze
Into those magic lakes where lie out-spanned
Visions undreamed ; those glancings but amaze,
Chilling the lover, who sees harboured there
Tremors he wots not of. Some throbbing dream,
Half-secret rays that from the inness flare :
About her head at twilight halos gleam—
For too much beauty frights the human mind,
The will’s confounded by entirety ;
By no conceptions are its bounds confined ;

Its power lies in its sobriety ;
And so the mortal man with mortal eye
Sought for the fleshly love that earth betrays,
But from her found his passions backward fly,
As doth the bat from morning's golden rays.
Content he grew to kiss her garment's hem,
Head bowed before her ; calling on her name,
Not as most maidens' names are called by men,
But in a reverent murmur, half in shame.

Unto this court, upon an August night
Eros came curious for his impious prize,
Ready as fore-admonished to ignite
Her heart with love for one all should despise :
Some loathly shape, near manhood, all might shun,
Twisted, distorted, dwarfed, abortive, foul ;
And then his deed of vengeance surely done
Wing back his muted flight, a ghostly owl.
So rising from a thicket of sweet briars
He cast himself adrift upon his wings,
And like an opal dropped from morning fires
Himself adown the roads of ether flings.
Alighted on the terrace of her room,
Parting the awnings, wide her lattice found ;
Sees Psyche languid, heedless of her doom—
A petal nestling in the snowy ground !—
In twilight smile her artless lips were posed,
Naked her breasts betrayed the heart beneath

Stirred by the presence of Love's radiant rose
Whose perfume through her sleep the Dreams unsheath.
But Eros, lord of love, the chamber gained,—
The virgin sanctuary of this sweet child,
Grew sorrowful by thoughts of pity chained,
By innocent virginity beguiled.
His heart ceased striving senseless from its ache,
Love self-tormented by his torments fell,
Burnt by self-kindling flames at his own stake,
He first did feel the poignance of Love's hell.
Sped thoughts of vengeance for such dreams of love
That shallow in its basin grew the sea,
Outmatched by passion's passion that did move
The soul of love to its profundity.
In haste he sought Apollo from the spot
Implored that he his oracle might use ;
All angry mother's counsels were forgot
Whilst love did their remembering refuse.
For love's oft stronger than a mother's word,
Though mother's love be vaster than the sky,—
Yet all her counsels, Love, the ruthless lord
Full oft inters with smile or glance or sigh.
Next morn her father earnestly did seek
Upon what man her hand she would bestow.
Her downcast head, her pale unblushing cheek
Told her still free from Cupid's curving bow.
Wherefore the King in haste did seek his Queen
And with her instant counsel briefly took,

As how to fight this evil unforeseen,
How best the anger of the gods to brook ;
And she and all the sages of the court
Told him to send to Delphi to enquire
Where Psyche's consort better might be sought,
Since none there seemed whom she did yet desire.
'Twi'x grief and fear the royal father sent
Lord's messengers unto the Delphic ring :
Eros beneath the curtain double bent
Bade them take back this answer to their king :
" That of this world his Psyche none might wed,
But decked for death should to the mountains go,
And there, deserted, on her bridal bed
Await her fate." The fire ceased to glow.
Thus Love his person hides 'neath many masks—
Eros, Apollo ! Nought too great nor small
He dare not use to culminate his tasks,
All spells to him are known that hearts enthrall.
Homeward retired the lords, with gifts returned,
And to their King spoke answer from the God :
The aged one, when he the news had learned,
His beard awry, his raiment rent, unshod,
Wailing, abroad he ran into the street,
And cried his ruin to the morning crowd,
Moaned Psyche's fate ; held high the winding sheet—
Her bridal veil ; her bridal robes—the shroud.
But coward city dreading wrath of Heaven
Emptied of pity, spurned his broken cries,

And bade him swift prepare that very even,
Straight to fulfil the mandate of the skies.

When Psyche learned of her impending fate
In silence she prepared her for the end,
Saying : " Though Death himself shall be my mate,
My lover being, he will be my friend :
For I, whilst dwelling within mortal ken,
Not one ill word from any did receive ;
Then since the Gods are kinder yet than men
Only in love from Death can I believe.
Though Love be Death, with Death comes Love at length,
Yea, comes to take and hold me in his arms !—
O Eros ! now I feel thy hidden strength,
And feel my heart o'erwhelmed by love's alarms."
Thus she alone was tearless, fearing nought ;
Her day seemed emptied of life's greatest things ;
Divinity had discontentment brought,
Whilst most had kisses—she gold offerings—
No man on her had gazed, with tender words
Had sought embraces or a kiss to guile ;
No lover's breath had fanned her hair ; the birds
Knew more of love than she. Sadly a smile
Uplit her countenance as forth she went,
Robed as Death's bride, unto the mountain crest,
Followed of all the city, sorrow bent,
Unto the bridal couch, where she must rest.
Yea, rest mayhap with Death—vague, sombre lover,

And dark, mysterious, terrible to see ;
What bridal night ! with low'ring clouds as cover
To fateful love whose end is mystery !
And so Divinity would seem to be
Irksome to mortal and to gods the same :
Too little for the Mistress of the Sea,
Too much indeed for Psyche's heart to tame.
Poor, tender heart that thirsted sore for love !
Love—not as earthly creatures speak the word,
But quickening fire of God's, the spirit dove,
Piercing the heart's own soul as with a sword.
Rather did Psyche in her innocence
From fleshly lips imagine love would spring,
Not dreaming that, in his magnificence,
Young Love himself would true love truly bring.

BOOK I

FELICITY AND DOUBT

I. NIGHT

A GLEAMING pebble slides into a pool !
A fleeting glimmer ere the blackness rule
The lustre from its smooth and glossy side,
In obscuration in the dusky tide :
The Red Orb slips into the lap of night,
Red gouts in welling sprays of flooding light
Shatter the amethyst ; the midday sun,
Shambles, half-stifled, into grey and dun ;
Undeterminable islands traverse space
Imponderous and slumberous, to face
Green golden walls of argent dripping light,
Mocking the sable curtailer of night,
Who, luring i' the draperies of her gown
Imprisons them with her impenetrable frown.
Pale intermittent gusts flow out in waves,
So fairness from the darkness, lightness saves ;
Unhinging purpurate and ponderous shade
Of murky hands upon the orient laid

'Neath rude and extravagant,
Crimson and arrogant
Wings of the vastitude,
Of the orb's magnitude
That ravish and rake the deep
Ere it may sink to sleep.
Light flares ! —swings back tremendous and offended !—
Day is ended !
The consistent shafts of lightning ore
Fall sharp across a dead and ashen floor.
Light dies, and with night's density is blended.
Day is dead !
Drooped the vermeil poppy head,
And o'er the massive hills descended,
To languish in its gory bed
By sullen, swaddling clouds attended,
Slaughtered, the red-gold calf is bled
Into the West. Gold turns to lead !
The racks rest on the ramparts of the hill,
And all their vapoury essences outspill
In mists insidious to maze each field
In niveous wraithes, whose fay-like forms, concealed
From sunshine, rest in cords that bind the earth
To vault above at daylight's death and birth ;
And imprints from whose violet stencilling finger,
At dawn are first to shew, at eve the last to linger
In the flushed orient,
Pale but floriant,

Young primroses—the stardust of the spring ;
Latent awhile, enfoliated, to bring
By wintry brave endurance
Their freshest youngling radiance
Unto the vernal soils.
Freed of old winter's toils.
Whilst honied breezes fling
Spring's perfumes i' the airs,
Quelling hiemal cares ;
And new-dressed forests sing.
Thus the twilight roses lay
Like fluttered petals of the May,
The shades of spirits of a time
When earth as heaven was sublime.
And man fed on the spirit of his god,
Whose thoughts with golden pinions shod
Sped upward, upward beating into space
Till they beheld His face :
Or poised in adoration bent
Over the woodlands hyacinth scent,
Where every blade and root was leaven
Of the blessèd tears of Heaven.

But now the golden age is past and gone
And seeming only Death to be reborn :
Death creeping from such violet veils of eve
As now unto the dreaming landscapes cleave
Half-hiding, half-revealing in its maze

Of mirage vapours, mingled mist and haze,
The dales, the glades and this most tragic scene
Of lonely mountain, where the night clouds lean
In ponderous, huddled masses, sombre, still,
No longer slaves to driving tempests' will ;
Since all the winds of Heaven fast are sped
Away to guard the regions of the dead,
To stand as sentinels about the caves
Of sleep, a-wandering 'twixt the beds and graves—
A dream to some, an end to others' woes ;
A traveller-guide within whose care one goes
For but awhile, or to the journey's end :
To none an enemy, to all a friend.
So noisy day soars off on sheeny vans,
Whilst gentle Zephyr faintly, softly fans
The dreaming verdure bright in dewy mail,
And bears abroad the song of nightingale,
Caressed and hushed and silent sleeps the earth
Stifled its aching sorrow, dumb its mirth ;
All vagaries submerged in azure sleep,
Stunned lies its surging brain, and thus to keep
Her sanity throughout the flooding years,
Her hopes of retribution through her tears.
The feverous face, pale shivering 'mongst the stars
Awakes the dreamer ; innest thought unbars
Freed of its faded, drab and sordid cares ;
Imagination sulphurific, flares
In fierce, insatiable burstings, in the air ;

Loosed from its cavernous, labyrinthine lair
 In vast orbic spasms of wild flight'
 It throttles day and strangulates the night
 And with its fingers generates some sound
 That thunder trembles at, and quaking ground
 Delves deeper into self. Great thought is found
 Untrammelled of the aching cords of flesh
 That held it apathetic in its mesh.
 Thought—that 'neath bulk of vanished ages reels
 Of God-like likeness robbed ; that life conceals
 Forgotten in the depths of carnal prison,
 Spoiled of its ancient clarity of vision,
 Betwixt God and which there came the world's elision.
 Proud thought ! with all its pristine beauty dead,
 Risen torrentuous from its mundane bed
 Out through the night-stilled ether glittering sped
 Upon the widespread pinions of its wings
 Whither the fabulous, proud, Phœnix sings,
 Where song itself its formless body flings,
 And soaring up brings forth rich offerings
 That all its thankfulness to God might prove,
 For swift escapement from the narrowed grove
 Of solar worlds and their imaginings,
 Of fleshly gods and all their reasonings,
 But to cascade down paths to occult regions
 Where darkness and her myriad sable legions
 Incarcerate the thrice five mystic signs
 Of thought Celestial that quickened shines

Innate in holy men and on the Tree
Hung wounded there, bleeding for thee and me ;
Before it thundered through obscuring gloom
Into the darkness, telling Satan's doom.
Behind the Sacred Features from us drawn
And into nature mystically inborn—
Begetting a light-engendering daffodil,
Some of its erstwhile sanctity to spill,—
An holied sign ; a theodorian token
Un sullied of the world, uncrushed, unbroken,
Glowing, our ingrate hearts with peace to fill
That we in turn at our own death may kill
The murky forces, smoke of nether fires
From burning flames that lit the martyrs' pyres.
Thus in the crystal heart of this one flower
At some more sacred and more happy hour
Heaven, I think, did set such glory free
That from within its sweet simplicity
Shines forth the semblance of His hallowed bliss,
Lest blinded by our darkness we should miss—
Having no image of His charity—
Him, in the vastness of Eternity.

Thus is this little perfumed golden thimble
Unto mankind a token and a symbol,
Balm to a spirit sapped of love and joy
Full to the brim of earth and its annoy
Emptied a heart, of all and every pleasure

Reft of God's love—our greatest, fondest treasure—
Let gratefulness, responding to the eye,
Viewing this atom of sublimity
From depths intestine breathe requiting sigh
In thankfulness for such tranquillity ;
Let him beholden to the rectitude
Of such dispassionate and pure quietude,
Worship the Double Offering raised on high.

And so fell night and with her brought
Peace momentary to surging thought,
Seeking through infinity
To measure God's divinity ;
When it might find its tenets
In broken song of linnets ;
Find the integral whole
In frailest insect's soul ;
Seek its cosmic hour
In a fallen flower ;
Hear its solemn word
In the flight of a bird ;
All its glory see
In world's scenery ;
See all its emotions
In the waves of oceans.
And Heaven is ours, is with us from our birth,
Hell our own making, Heaven is our earth.
The choice is ours ; and power to refuse

Our very birthright human will may use.
For close around this half immortal world
Banners of saints and angels fly unfurled,
And every hour, though it be black or fair,
To God uprises in recorded prayer.
The day is given for our work and weeping
The night for rest, forgetfulness and sleeping,
Life lies before us filled with toil and pain,
But death comes close on trouble's faded train.
Then are our wages paid to God exact
For all our days and our own life compact.
And here below by every tear and frown
Is placed some rare new jewel in our crown.
So smoothest life begets the smallest jewel ;
Of greater worth, rewards are for that duel
Which men with devils through the ages fight
And ever must so long as day ends night.
Heaven is with us both in life and death,
At putting in and taking out of breath
With every soul 'tis present all the while
That soul doth live, and when that soul doth smile
Heaven is smiling too, rejoiced to see
Happiness dwelling in mortality.
Crystal than diamond fairer is to some,
God in the likeness of spring winds may come,
Blessed the mortal who has taste of bliss
In warm spring eddies' soft caressing kiss.
Blessed the mortal who sees in the night

Shadow of God upon the earth alight,
Knowing His Spirit, though he wakes or sleeps,
Its deathless vigil o'er his life-way keeps ;
And revels in the glory of each day
Pierced, purged and cleansed by sunlight's quickening ray,
Until again night rests upon the hills,
Where waking Heaven primal beauty spills.

And Psyche too, beholding Heaven's lamp
Was comforted ; for on her soul did tramp
Fear of this unknown thing, this venery,
Foretold for darkness and his empery :
" Phœbus ! " cried she, " great guardian of this globe,
Stay thus till morn, ah ! not to night unrobe,
But in that fiery raiment hold the sky
And fright away for me dread mystery."
And yet night fell, and found the piteous maid
Lone on the mountain, of the black afraid,
Poor sorrowing Psyche prone by gushing fount
Of cooling springs that washed the serried mount,
Coursing and spouting through flecked basalt funnels
In silvern, plashing, laughing, rippling runnels,
Downward descending, chafing shivered pool
Freshly as clear, translucent and as cool
As crystal lakes, 'neath hills of Paradise
O'er-shadowed by arched branching trees of spice.
Recumbent there, unto her ears drew nigh
Serenna's breath entuned to Zephyr's sigh :

“ The sighing, sighing southern wind
Sighing wind,
Sweetly kind,
Breathing, breathing o’er the plains
Meads and plains
Moist with rains ;
Seeking sleepers it may find
E’er may find
Lids sleep-lined,
In vales and dales, and shaded lanes
Roads and lanes
Glades and fanes,
Their sleep to fill with sweetest dreams.
Smiles and dreams
In shadow streams.
To puff the petals off the tree
That may be
Earth’s carpetry.
Soft and silvery smooth spring wind.”

The voices sank and faded in the breeze
And purling thoughts laid tranquil mind at ease.
Whilst all the soundless ghosts of gentle things
Found voice in sleepful throb of music’s wings,
And a lulled drowsiness more gentlier crept
Over the soft anemones that slept
On languid violets whose frail scent ascended
And with the liquid lilies’ breath emblended

To canopy the couch where Psyche lay
Tearful and sad at parting with the day,
Fearful yet glad at the hushed peace around,
Thankful since no immediate evil found
Herself defenceless on that mountain crest,
Alone awake, with all the world at rest.
Then once again the wind arose and sang
A swan-song to the day ; and thus began :

“ Sleeping thunder holds the sky
Enmantled in a robe of grey :
A sombre form to cloak the way
Where the failing lights glide by
Flick’ring awhile—
A fleeting smile.
The Zephyrs tranquil breathe
And round the shaggy elm-trees wreathe
Their signs : the twilight lilies spread
Their candent petals overhead
And evening steals away,
Mourning the ebbing day.”

But unto Psyche’s yet untuned ear
As wanton breezes did these songs appear,
Nor yet did guess that Zephyr was so nigh
Till fleeting cloud chased cloud across the sky,
And he still singing, with his moody choir

Did close surround her, curtaining the fire
Of limpid shafts outsliding from the moon ;
That under darkness he, this amorous boon
Might with more care and surety fulfil
And Eros please by his immediate skill.
Then, chasing through the gallery of tresses,
Lovingly lifting flowing bridal dresses
On to his vap'rous shoulders, speedy hied
Unto the vale below with Cupid's bride.
At the faint touch of his caressing breath
She fell to sleep, entranced deep as death,
And though uprising into blues of night
Dreamed she was sinking in a dream's delight.
But scarce as long as lightning wracks the sky
Was Zephyr ere he let her gently lie
Upon the mossy carpet of the ground
All sweetly flowering Love's fane around ;
There under swooning ramage of a tree
He laid her sleeping, breathing tenderly,
Her head soft pillowed on the silvern sand,
Himself did keep with languorous, winnowing hand
The bower freshly cool, up-piling flowers
Thickly upon her 'gainst the morning hours.
Lifting pearl driplets from the silvery rills
The full-cupped lily leaves with moisture fills,
That she uprising from her flowery bed
Might bathe her petalled hand and sleep-kissed head,
And into the deep-cupped blossom of the tree

He wafted dew, ambrosia to be
For her awakening and sweet levity.

II. THE AWAKENING

THE haloed moon had loitered down into Hesperian sky.
The youth-flushed Sun, his sleeping done, leaps i' his car on
high
With ocherous steeds, the Morning leads through coral-tinted
foam,
Sad Night retires as up he spires toward meridian dome.
Scarce let he slip the light-shaft whip across his dappled
team—
One spear of light to plough the night—one blood-gold
dripping beam,
When Psyche woke and muteness broke with childish, panting
cry ;
This strangeling place of magic grace, where sheltered she
did lie
To her did seem a waking dream that meets the breaking sky
In morn's twilight unsloughed the night of all her mystery.
As she arose beneath her toes earth's petalled carpet spread
And 'gainst that hour, the coned flower, found she ambrosia
fed.
She bathes her hands, and poised stands to part the awning-
bows,
Sees many a boat the vault afloat with wondrous painted prows,
But young delight dissolves in fright rememb'ring the past eve,

And terror's spell upon her fell. Her cheeks the roses leave.
But whilst she wept, as if she slept still in her sylvan bed,
Like moan of bird, a voice she heard and these the words it
said :

“ Hear thou a song whose verses throng a book of holy lore
Where ancient prince, king of love, did sing and wisdom did
outpour :

“ Set me as a seal upon thine heart,
As a seal upon thine arm :
Envy is adamant as the grave
O'er which Love holds the palm.
The coals of Love are coals of fire
That burn with vehement flame ;
No torrent flows that them may quench,
No flood their fire may tame.
And all the substance of thine house
That thou for love might give
Contempt alone would buy from Love,—
Thy sorrow's expletive.’

If thine heart's stirred by any word that lieth in the song
Then think on it, and drink of it, and by its power grow
strong.”

Poor Psyche gazed around amazed the singer she might see,
Whose haunting words in song of birds still thrilled the
scenery.

No form seemed there, nor did appear to her expectant eye
Nor might be found in tree nor ground nor floating in the sky.
Pants she with fear, "What did I hear? Some spirit dwelleth
nigh

Mayhap 'tis he, my groom to be, my dragon-husband's cry."
But as she spoke again there broke upon the morning air
The tranced voice who cried :

" Rejoice and banish thy despair,
Exile all the hosts of care.
Listen to the tale I sing,
And let it pleasure to thee bring.
Love is a wanton, wayward sprite,
Free as the breath of a summer night ;
Subject to his knees he brings
Beggars, princes, priests and kings.
Pursue him not, if thou wouldst win him,
Who chaseth those that seek to flee him.

" No tyrant greater he than any
Nor bribed by promise, pound nor penny,
By no cunning to be bought
The only lure one kindly thought ;
And none more lavish is than he
With treasures of his sovereignty.

" And though thine heart by him is burned,
When thy longing is full earned

“Thou wilt find thy sacrifice
Hath gained a pleasure none despise.
What wonder he is glorious then
Who worshipped is by gods and men!”

With ending lines a choir combines and with the spirit sings,
The air instilled, about is filled with tremors of their wings.
Swift makes she choice to seek the voice, so traverses the wood
And near afraid gains dappled glade where many a tall tree
stood.

Fenced round the hills, vain sunlight spills itself on canopy
Of roofing branch no shaft may ranch out shooting from the
sky.

From thence she sees, freed of the trees, on marbled terraced
mound,

Like mighty jewel whose sacred fuel in heaven alone is found,
A gilded fane with walls astain with marbles green and red
With agate fired, in sards attired, in flowers apparelled.

Spice-bearing trees, down-weighed with bees, caress'd the
gleaming walls

About the roof a crimson woof of woven blossom falls.

Great fountains gleam with crystal stream upleaping to the
clouds

From green jade dishes where foreign fishes gleamed out from
virent shrouds,

Great slumberous flowers in cumbrous bowers the snowy
statues shade,

A tracery of lacery of mauve wistaria laid

Long violet cones, in scented zones about arch'd trellises,
Whilst costmary and rosemary each lathe embellishes.
Fresh in the dawn a wave of lawn down flows to still lagoon,
Whose waters keep, reflected deep, 'neath where green wil-
lows swoon,

The greenery of scenery of towering shapes of hills
Whose mighty wood, a verdant hood, the vales with shadow
fills.

Through dented gap in mountain's lap glints out the turquoise
sea

With glistening shore that lies a floor of lapis lazuli,
There gold-dust sand spreads aureate strand pranked out
with opal shell,

Of snow lips kissed, all decked with twist of serpent sea-
weed's spell :

On dripping rock sprawls purple shock of eight smooth
tentacles

—Exotic cluster of flowers that muster on lignous manacles—
Stately, complaisant the Chinese pheasant his scale-like
plumage grooms,

And parrots squawk and peacocks walk through paved and
trellised rooms,

Smooth butterflies and dragon-flies and little birds of fire
Flit in and out where peonies pout, sipping out their desire,
On every pond the lotus frond holds bud up to the sun,
Thick scarlet flowers throw burning showers where limpid
rilllets run.

And lilies white as Luna's light, and lilies golden yellow

Raise pollened heads from verduous beds, where melons lie
and mellow.

This spot so vernal spring eternal had brought from winter's
death,

All beauty wreathed, each thing inbreathed divinity's own
breath.

So Zephyr blew and gently drew sweet Psyche to the fane
Which she amazed found full emblazed with gifts gods only
gain.

First she was led to ivory bed, and bath of April dew
Where girl and slave her tired feet lave and off her sandals
drew

Who bade her keep a peaceful sleep sound resting for awhile,
And on the billows of snowdown pillows she sank with
thankful smile.

Sweet Morpheus came and spoke the name of sleep that knows
no dream,

His breath she drank and downward sank in Lethe's purling
stream.

III. EPITHALAMIUM

When she had slept one azure hour an angel woke her with
a flower.

And many attendant serving maids, combs, mirrors, fans about
her laid,

Invisible ethereal hands, ungirt her jewelled clasps and bands,
Unbraided all her tresses fair, loosening the cascades of her
hair.

Her tunic woven without seam, broidered with many a
flowery scheme,
Flowed o'er her body to her feet, with five silk veils that did
compete
With melting snow, so soft they were that May fly-wing
would easier tear,
Then the last garment that did skim the tender bloom upon
each limb,
Like thistledown it seemed to rest, upon twin blossom of her
breast
And downward floated to her knees as waters ripple in the
breeze.
This, last, when loosed the cerule thread, upward they pulled
above her head,
Then on her loveliness did brood, her sinuous beauty white
and nude.
The drowsy winds were moved to rape so young and vernal
glowed her shape,
Their lips against her lips did press, folding her form in soft
caress.
Diaphanous, translucent grew the beauty which their eyes did
view,
Upon her cheeks the pollen lay of frailest cherry-blossom
spray.
Her little snow mounts rose and fell like daisies dancing in a
dell
Whose hearts of sundew, golden tinged, are by white plumes
of snowflakes fringed.

Then lightly 'long the tesselled path, merrily tripped she to
her bath
And o'er the glassy waters bent, who filled with loving bold
intent
Lapped at her little ivory toes, each tipped with flower of a
rose.
First one foot in and then the twain, swiftly to draw them
back again,
At length with happy little laugh—complete immersion in
the bath !
Amorous circles of the water, greedy embraced earth's
fairest daughter,
Silver shoals of elfin silver fish swirled up to fill Love's loving
wish,
And bore her lightly on their fins' soft mesh drawn taut on
crimson spines.
And oh what joy, what ecstasy in this sacred bath had she !
The bathing over ; robed again, she wandered through the
pillared fane,
Until with daylight's hours decreased, the voices bade her to
the feast
Where fruits and cakes of strange delight, sweet to the taste
and to the sight
Were set upon the inlaid board, with bowls that many spices
hoard.
Here unseen minions all attended and voices with lulled
music blended.
Who faintly fanning with their wings sang of esoteric things :

Of the Five Mysteries of Joy, how was born God's lovely
Boy ;
Of the Five Mysteries of Grief, the Supper, Traitor, Garden,
Thief ;
Of the Five Mysteries Glorious, Peace crowned with stars,
victorious.
Next one arose with gent'lest voice and from sweet lyrics
maketh choice,
And to a melancholic air, betrays love's dolour, love's despair.

“ Lonely linnet's song in swaying bough
Song of sorrows, song of love, hear it now, now !
Love-pained throstle, dulcet singing
Mournful trilling, languor bringing
Hear it now ! now !

“ Love-lorn blossoms faint and drooping die
Parched of passions' torrid sun, fading lie, lie,
Ring-doves murmuring sighing, sighing ;
Lilies waterless and dying
Fading, lie, lie.

“ In the tranquil peace of evening air
Hear plashing waters weep in love's despair,
Philomela melancholy
Sings of love and all its folly,
Sings of love's despair.”

E'er last strains had died away, another had begun to play,
She sang of love's content and rest, deeming present time the
best.

“ I shall never be more happy
In the glorious days when later
I shall pluck the crimson berry,
Whilst the light from day doth hasten.

“ Little now could tease my fancy
From thy sweetness and thy laughter :
May I never, lovely lady,
To thy service prove defaulter.

“ Love, in thee thy love will liven,
When the wind with blossom dances,
When the lotus bud shall ripen
And the sun spill winter's blackness ;

“ When the fisher shall sit gloating
Where the argent rills are streaming
In milk eddies frothy foaming
On the margent's kingcups stealing !

“ When the bees with singing solemn
Quiver, poised o'er honied bean-blooms
Bathing in the powdered pollen,
Stardust sprinkled from the moonbeams.”

The feasting finished, Psyche rose and through the incensed
garden goes.
Blossoms unfold like rare brocades, each flower into the other
fades,
And cypresses and cedars hold dark conclave where their
branches fold
Building a strange fantastic hall with perfumed pillars for a
wall,
Slim velvet eucalyptus trees the drowsy pools to ripples
tease,
And with a bluey-green haze the water's trembling surface
glaze,
While 'midst their plum-bloom foliage fly kingfishers in rare
jewellery.
With envious, candid, childish eyes she sees the dancing
butterflies,
O'erwhelming wish to wear their wings, dew to her fringed
eyelid brings,
When with drifting blossoms they in levity would fain essay.
Whilst marvelling at some fallen flower returning upward
to its bower
She sees white petals turn to wings, the stem to legs, with
which it clings.
Fleet from the blossoms of the wave she runs the powdery
vans to save !
Alas ! the rillet's flowery breath has proved the pinioned
blossoms' death.
'T'wain filled of spirit of new birth fell a-fluttering to earth—

Ah ! what a poignant barb of pain deep pierced into her love-sick brain :
Was she the only one alone, to whom Love was but carved stone,
Bearing the likeness of a god, as void of passion as the sod
Flowering at its graven feet, with eyes that no love-glances meet ?
Traversing 'neath trellises where snowy cranes basked at their ease
And like to stern devouts upstood in pensive solemn brotherhood,
She drew unto the river's marge and there beheld a cedarn barge
That, through the gloom of giant trees, did stealthy glide before the breeze ;
With deck-house carved from sandalwood, with silken canvas red as blood,
With towering masts of ebony, with tiller of chalcedony ;
Three decks in camphor wood all laid, whilst water coursing through each blade
Poured forth full sweet antiphonies unto the wind's soft harmonies.
Turquoise studded sycamores proved shafts to onyx-handled oars.
The sheets and rigging were of silk, some red as blood, some white as milk,
The prow in shape of Jove's great eagle with pinions spread, majestic, regal,

Spired glittering of every gem, all seemed aflame from stern
to stem ;
With agate, amber, almandine, ruby, sapphire, tourmaline ;
With chrysoprase and chrysolyte, moonstones, coral, mala-
chite ;
With amethyst, jasper, jade and jacinth, topaz, zircon, sard
and hyacinth
The scintillating bark was manned by some wizard's magic
hand,
Whilst as it slowly glid along the air was filled of fairy song.

“ Hear ! Silvery flutter of gossamer wings
Over the flowery breath of the waves,
Over the waves ;
Whilst gaudy sunlight wildly flings
Golden globes to the dancing winds,
Dancing winds.
Tumbling in revelry,
Leaping in revelry,
O'er crest of the waves ;
The leaping waves
Of the laughing sea.

“ Scarlet and green the sea-flower peeps
Up from the purple azure deeps,
Longingly, lovingly, kissing the feet
Of fairy fireflies' fluttering choir,
Filled of, spilled of, trembling fire ;

“ Longingly, lovingly, rising to greet
Silvery flutter of gossamer wings.”

Voices invisible at the prow burst forth in song unheard
enow,
Melody gathered from the waves, from the sirens' silvery
caves,
To a joyous lilting measure, song of mirth and song of pleasure
That at twilight mermaids sing when the sun goes westering.

“ Watch ! the sea-horses
With gathering paces,
Bubble-flecked faces,
Running wild races
Over the ocean ;

“ Wild in their courses
Plunging and leaping,
Magically keeping
Manes and tails sweeping
With mighty commotion ;

“ In great snowy forces
From morning till gloaming,
Frothing and foaming
O'er the vast roaming
Ivory white squadron !

“ Watch the sea-horses
Wild in their courses,
In great snowy forces,
Ivory white squadron,
With mighty commotion
Over the ocean ! ”

Approaching thus the sails were lowered ; a coracle, like
golden gourd,
Sped o'er the waves and gained the shore and back unto the
barge it bore
Psyche bewildered.
Forth she sailed; by many a happy sight regaled,
Till drawing on some hidden creek they bade her land and
straightway seek
A temple on whose altar she would find engraved love's
mystery.
She, landing, turned around to see the ship had vanished
mystically
And but the stream as ever lay, a silent restless silver way.
Amazed she glanced behind, before, but beauty only 'twas
she saw :
Gardens and glades and gorgeous trees, sights, scents,
and scenes that only please ;
And so peaceful, quiet, calm, that from her fell her wild
alarm.
Close by her feet a path began which down through many a
pleasaunce ran.

So on she passed through gardens new and many a perfumed
avenue
Till she perceived a sylvan glade where a temple stood
displayed.
Lightly treading the marbled fairway, she hopped upon a
porphyry stairway,
Upon whose summit candent spired, an altar with nine
candles fired,
In midst of which an aspen flame lit up the God's beloved
name,
Upon whose sides of malachite these words appeared unto the
sight :

“ AN ODE TO THE MYSTERIES OF LOVE

“ So little seems mysterious beside Love,
So little lives beyond conceptions graded,
Or with such life dynamic thrills and throbs,
Bursting through chrysalis that holds it slaved.
*Love alone so seems to be immune
From earth and time,
Love alone so seems to be outhewn
From the sublime.*
What through the ages has so lodged with pain
That suffering seems the summit of its way,
The scorching blood that burns its pulsing vein
The death and dawn of both its night and day ?
The God of Suffering is the God of Loves,

“ The God of Loves is but the God of Lights,
The trefoil springs and its own mystery proves
A trinity of world’s sublimest heights.
The acme of the Passion of the flesh
Is pain ; the bud of love’s defending thorn,
Love, essence of the Soul’s encircling mesh,
Is from the womb of suffering reborn.
The ill and the ill’s antidote combine
One with the other, and do interchange ;
The circle back recoils unto the line
And still the line the circle formed doth range.
Love nurtures suffering, suffering nurses love,
The youth the parent, and the parent youth,
The one the other’s quality doth prove,
The worth of each doth shew each other’s truth.

“ Unto the boundaries of stern, changeless time
The total whole distintegrates to cleave ;
Units unite and to the heavens climb
To form again the whole and thus to leave
All as it ever was and e’er had been :
This is creation and creation’s law ;
The unseen things become the only seen,
The undefined become defined once more.
Nothing we were and nothing we shall be,
For nothingness is but Eternity :
The bubble forms to burst into the air,
There to remain, though it may not appear ;

“ And so its semblance, after as before,
Takes the same image, essence is the same ;
It has but passed through the eternal door,
One side is man, the other the Sword of Flame.

“ Soon shall the song of life burst forth again,
Soon shall the glorious youth of ages sing ;
Each chord, each harmony so freed of pain
That tears of sorrow crystal founts will fling :
Yea ! all the tears of all the tortures past
In silvern founts about Love’s sacred throne
Shall purest crystal columns upward cast ;
And Love shall drink of them and shall atone
For all the grief, the sorrow and the pain,
For all the sighs, for all the watching hours,
That mortals suffered in his earthly train :
The branch of thorns shall bloom a spray of flowers.

“ Man is not evil at his generation,
The heart created is by Heaven filled,
’Tis only by the world’s contamination
Its treasures of divinity are spilled.
The instinct natural is a seed of grace,
Innate desire to accomplish kindly things,
But on this earth, ’tis evil’s feet outpace
The flight of angel’s wings,
And last in proof, perceive the simplest act
Reminds us of our lost sublimity

“ Reviving in the soul, the soul’s compact
’Twixt man and immortality.

“ When all the worlds are dead and all the stars,
When life and death united are in one,
Then will creation vanish, and the bars
That prison up our souls shall be undone.
Cosmos first cosmos did to chaos fly,
Earth was outshaken from sublimest sky,
Let chaos to cosmos be engathered and
All in their primal love will glorious stand.”

The sinking of the even sun gave warning that the day was
done.

The chillsome drapery of night dimmed the waning sprays of
light,

So, guided by the Evening Star embedded fast in deep
Zaffar,

Psyche on tawny velvet moth steered on glinting Alioth,
And so regained her fairy home; there ’neath a starry
painted dome

Upon the pillows of her bed, she laid to rest her drowsy head.
Then glanced around to view with awe the chamber and its
magic store,

There, what rare treasures, rarest store, were spread o’er
walls and seats and floor,

Rich tapestries all silken wove, as soft as plumage of a dove,

With scenes in pleasant places laid where nymphs midst
blossoms hid afraid
Of Cupid who with golden bow chased them dodging to
and fro
From stem to stem of towering pine festooned with creepers
colubrine ;
Whilst one portrays an azure sea with coral beach and wizardry
Of sands dim lit with oyster shells and caves that seemed the
fruit of spells,
So wondrous in their shape and hue, so strange the plants
that in them grew ;
On silver flower of starry foam, sat Venus with her ivory comb
Below her limpid form did play dolphins and a galaxy
Of snowy nymphs, whilst tritons blew trumpets of opalescent
hue.
Upon her bed a coverlet that seemed with dew all glistening
wet,
For it was but one spread of pearls and diamonds sewn
in twists and twirls,
In floriant imitations lined, all in a silken fringe confined.
The mattresses were stuffed with flowers each day fresh
culled from morning bowers,
The curtains hung about the bed were may-fly wing and
spider's-web.
No fitter wedding-couch for him who is Love's greatest
seraphim,
There Psyche felt indeed a queen, as if her world had ever
been

In this one chamber of a god ; as if she ne'er before had trod
An earth less magic, less divine, than in this holy, fairy shrine.
About her unseen slaves attended that every comfort might be
 blended,
Making each enhoned hour rare as paradisal flower
With shading wings and lulling chant, and fans formed of the
 incense plant,
Unto the lute's accompanying sigh they sang her a sweet
 lullaby :

“ And who may tell of gentler things than sleep ?
Of sweeter veilment of life's tedious day
Than when the darkling slaves of Hypnos keep
Their steady watch upon the sleeper's way ?

“ And who can speak of kinder hands to soothe
The weary thought, the tired, aching soul,
The tangled tresses of the heart to smooth :
Unto the mortal, gods' most precious dole !

“ Near unto Paradise, whilst body sleeps,
Free and untrammelled of the dream-king's net
The conscious soul communion sweetly keeps
With all the stars there are in heaven set.

“ Oh Hypnos ! mystery-lord of sleep, appear,
And take within thine arms our Psyche here.”

The chords vibrating yet did see the working of sleep's
mystery,
For Psyche, wearied by the day, in arms of Hypnos swooned
away.
But sable darkness vigil kept upon her as she softly slept
And unto Eros message brought how Psyche was of dreaming
fraught.
Then listless arms of Hypnos turned to arms that clung and
arms that burned,
The lips of Hypnos took a form more nigh material to storm
Cheeks, eyes, and breast and pouting mouth ; caressed with
eddies from the South,
And round her brow Sleep's chilly hands became a crown of
molten bands,
And through her body burnt the flame that high Olympus
may not tame.
For Love rules gods enthralled as men, none to his power is
alien ;
E'en now the Soul of Life must be a slave without his empery:
Thus Sleep the Soul to Love did give, that given soul Love
e'er might live.

1916-17.

END OF BOOK I

BOOK II

FELICITY AND DOUBT—*Continued*

I. THE BRIDAL MORN

PALE roses of the pearl cobalt
Flush and flower orient skies,
Scenting garden of the vault,
Sipping of each bloom the dew
Even on their lips had put
To glisten with the vermeil deeps :
Columned wraiths from shepherd's hut
Scales to stable primrose veil,
On powder pillars of blue breath ;
Slumbrous lows of cattle come
From pastures lush and spread beneath
Rich fringing veilment of tall elms :

Birds within their branches keep
High festival of carolling,
And Cupid wake ; who lightly shakes
His dreamy pinions from their sleep ;

Reveals the treasures of his eyes,
Lifting lashes' curtaining fringe ;
Breaking circlet of silk arms
Fast enchaining tranced prize :
As daisies linked of lipping child
Soft bind the baby locks they crown,
So lay she bounden in Love's chain
Both by Love's lips and touch beguiled.

And yet with such a gentle grace
Did he the tender fetters move
That scarcely was one lock displaced
From out its downy pillowed grove ;
And so beside her doth he stand
Vested with golden shafts and bow,
And stoops to kiss those flowered bands
That through her lang'rous tresses flow ;
Sweet child, still wrapt in baby dreams,
But stirs the fingers of one hand,
Whilst o'er her lips a fairy stream
Of love-thoughts course from Vision-land.

The lattice lifted, up he sped
Into the æther of the morn
And into dazzling heights was borne
By Zephyr on his dripping wings.
He sped o'er mountains, hills, and vales,
He drifted o'er the saffron sea,

Till all the world but seemed to be
A panorama for the clouds.
And then, as missile from a sling,
He sudden plumbed the vault to earth,
To land by the ancestral hearths
Where Aphrodite fled the waves.

Without the lattice little birds
Perching where sweet rose-branch girds
The silvern rail of balcony,
Raise their morning euphony ;
And so with happy, natural song
Wake the young bride from the throng
Of those sleep-attending herds
Of fleecy dreams as white as curds
That bind the soul in bryony
In contrast to night's ebony,
Guarding the sleeper all night long
Till Dawn arises fresh and strong.

“ CUPID ! CUPID ! ” mavis carols,
Trilling 'neath the lilac's bandrols,
“ CUPID ! CUPID ! ” chirp the sparrows,
The crow croaks “ GOD,” the raven “ Arrows,”
Whilst from throbbing breast of dove
Comes forth one word—the sweet word “ LOVE.”
And at that word glad Psyche wakes
And all her curls from slumber shakes,

Next outstretches sleepy hand
Whither her 'magination planned
Would be her husband, by her side.
And no one there ! . . . eyes open wide !

“ My husband ! Stranger ! Lover ! Friend,
Whither art fled, oh, whither gone ?
What terror in the dark hath borne
Thee, thee, my love to some malicious end ?
Oh ! tending voices tell, oh, tell me where
My love is fled, and is he safe and well !
What evil wizard has, with darkling spell,
Blighted my freshling nuptials with despair ?
Oh, speak ! oh answer, oh, but tell me true
Who then hath robbed me thus of my new love ?
Is it the will of Jupiter, above
That plucks the blossom e'er it ever grew ? ”

The voices answer :

“ Psyche ! fear not, nor fret thy heart away,
Thy lover will return this very night,
And when the darkness falls upon the land
And neither without, within, shines any light
Softly and noiseless to thy side will steal
Thy new-found love, who speedy shall embrace
Thy longing lips, thy silken locks, thy hands,
Thy myrtle eyes, the roses of thy face ;
And yet again within his circling arms

“Thyself will lie all sheltered from the gloom,
Thy little heart composed for tranquil sleep,
Thy love’s embrace, thy soul’s entranced room.”

PSYCHE :

“Then why may I not look upon his face,
And why may I not see his human form ?
Is he some demon whom the gods have sent,
Some monster whose appearance doth disgrace
Our great creation, and our godly form,
Whose very semblance doth outshame the shades
Of evilness itself that doth frequent
The deep recesses of a thunder-storm ?
Is he so hateful that I ne’er may see
Even his shadow cast upon the floor ?
His voice is sweet, and yet perhaps that is
The secret fruit of some deep wizardry !”

THE VOICES :

“Thou mayst not seek to see his outward guise,
Thou mayst not seek to pierce his mysteries,
Thou hast within thy hands a golden prize
Which if thou tempt to prove will turn to lead
And hang about thy neck, a strangling load,
A canker to thy love and to thy joy,
That unto deeper misery will goad
Thy hapless self ; tormented unto death
Thou shalt forth journey in most utter grief

“ And wander o’er the earth in fruitless search
Of him thou lovest ; so let thy unbelief
Become foundation to thy firmer faith.”

PSYCHE :

“ How strange, most strange, my friends, it seems to
be

That him I love and he who lovest me
Must be for ever a deep mystery
Unto myself, a mistress who, though free
To love and to be loved, may never know
Unto what semblance it may be I owe
My love-allegiance to. Is it a shadow,
Is it a ghost, this mystical hero ? ”

But silence hung a heavy pall around,
No answer came from ceiling, walls, or ground,
No voice solution to the question found ;
Only low music, soft as summer wind
With gentle, languid singing was combined,
And numbed the senses of the waking mind.
So wakeful half, and yet half wrapt in dream
Psyche arose from ’neath the woven seam
Of silky sheet, and plunged into the stream
Of April rain that served her for a bath
Gathered from lilies when the spring was rath ;
And clothed stepped forth, adown the marbled path.

II. THE MISTRESS OF A GOD

And clothed stepped forth and in the garden stood
Surveying valley, mountain, hill and wood,
In tranced rapture drank the predial air
Of perfumed breezes playing round her hair.
And in an acme of celestial bliss
Nimble she sped the blushing rose to kiss,
Saying 'twixt kisses showered on the rose :
 " I am a bride ! ah, blessed flower Love chose
Should be an emblem of love's honied joy
I bid thee bear that kiss to that sweet Boy
Who with his roseate wings doth light the morn,
And bringeth love at last to the forlorn."
So, half ecstatic with her new-found life,
All day she passes, murmuring " Bride " and " Wife,"
And, ever tended by her unseen slaves,
Blissful she waits the hour that she most craves :
When he, her unknown lover, shall return
To hold her in his arms ; when love shall burn
With unrestrained flame within her heart,
And she of love itself but seems a part.
Nor did the lonely watch she kept at day
Her bliss diminish nor her joys affray.
So days pass by in wrapt felicity,
And every moment breeds fresh ecstasy ;
Until one even on the terrace she
In chastened mood ponders the scenery :

How beautiful yet how empty seemed the scene !
The flowery dales, the limpid lawns of green
Stretching afar to gleaming lake below
Where freckled sunlight dappled shadows throw !
Empty, for not a human form did bring
That touch, completing Heaven's conjuring,
The touch that makes the wanderer's heart rejoice
When, far from home and sound of human voice,
A humble homestead, hidden half in trees,
Telling of food, of rest, and gentle ease,
Appears in sight ; or when on winter night
Through mirky gloom bursts forth a ruby light
From some small inn, upon the weary road
The pilgrim traverses with irksome load :
No human hand shewed here, no mortal token,
By nothing earthy was the beauty broken,
Superbly magic in its perfect grace,
Peerless in splendour, faultless the whole space
Betwixt the eye and distant horizon,
Each shape did Beauty with her brilliance blazon.
And yet to one whose childhood had enjoyed
More simple fairnasses, and whose hands had toyed
With some smooth bead or pebble from the shore
Deeming it treasured gem, and watched with awe
How in the water's depths it glistened keen
Becoming clothed in yet a brighter sheen,—
Perceived this magic, speedy ran to tell
A fellow playmate, who would find a shell

And vow it rarer than the glinting chrome,
And wrap it up, and happy bring it home.
And then, the years sped on, and many a spring
Unto the youthful memory did cling,—
And placid beauties of the youngling year
Before the mind did oft-times reappear
In all their primal glory, whilst the thought
From former springs their former fairness bought :
And yet to one whose youthfulness had found
Joy in the natural beauty viewed around,
Whose soul reaped pleasure from creation's lore,
Who sought for mortal treasure and no more ;—
With none to share it, this scenery did seem
The fruit phantastic of some floating dream ;
A paradise without one angel there
To share its joys, of fellowship all bare :
For half the pleasures of enjoyment fly
When none to help in sharing them are nigh :
So thus this spot appeared to Psyche's tender eye.
She roamed the gardens, groves, and colonnades,
She trod the velvet lawns and flowery glades,
She watched the gold-fish in each marble pool,
And dabbled in their waters fresh and cool,
And listless culled the many fruits and flowers
Where butterflies caroused in jewelled showers,
And watched the birds, and ants, and all such things
As Heaven creates with feelers, fur or wings,
Thought on the wonders of each fallen leaf,

The clustered blossoms, and the verdant sheaf
Of sylvan foliage that adorned each bough,
Gazed on them all in turn and wondered how
Great mother Nature ever had conceived
Such a variety, or had ever weaved
Such an entanglement of delicacy within
So narrow a boundary ; whence the origin
Of so much faultlessness, what holy womb
At one time did such subtleties entomb ;
And what great God was the progenitor
Of all these mysteries whose heritor
We mortals on this globe terrestrial are ?
All this she pondered e'er she wandered far.
Alas, she felt that she must ever be
Alone, the mistress of this scenery.
ALONE ! the word rang out as though a bell
Tolled out with fateful strokes a deathly knell
Through which reverberations seemed to flow
Of Happiness the pale and cold echo.
But of a sudden in her conscience rose
A thought that did a deeper sense disclose
Of gratitude toward her lover-god,
Who had with golden love her sandals shod
That she might tread upon diviner ways
And so near half-immortal live her days
Amongst the attendant luxuries divine
That round the lives of blest immortals shine ;
Despite this throb of conscience there yet hung

A shadow pendent o'er her heart that flung
Its ominous fingers round her smiling thoughts
And with perfidious craft content transports
To discontentment and its insatiate hordes
Of desires perpetual whose rewards
Are vain pernicious counsels that drive on
The mind to madness; as Euroclydon
Spurs o'er creation in implacable hate
And inextinguishable angers that abate
Only when all the fury of his soul
Is drained and faintness holds him in control,
Smothered and blind 'neath cumbrous clouds of
lead—

On speed the abominable Furies round her head,
Spreading mistrustful and insidious wiles
About her sweet conceptions, " Time beguiles
Only when Time is dead ; here Time lives on
For ever, Psyche, and thy mien shall don
Its robe of wrinkles, whilst thine eyes shall grow
Slothful, devoid all of their aery glow :
And he who loves thee now, shall flee away
Leaving thee here abandoned, night and day
Alone : ALONE ! dost hear that hideous word ?—
The cordon of incorruptible silence and
That unreprieved sentence none withstand
With sanity ; an inexorable dead-weight
That with perpetual pressure plumbs the brain
Until the victim dies alone INSANE ! "

The voices ceased, poor Psyche fainting turned
And 'gainst the marble pressed her brow that burned
With all the aching pangs of doubts and fears,
With all the arid bitterness that sears
Life's brightest moments ; lest we should forget
These days we view the light of are a debt
To the Immortals, a debt on which there stands
More interest than would ransom all the lands
We know on earth ; though each the richest king
His rarest treasures unto God might bring,
But one thing in repayment would be asked
The full completion of his destined task—
Safe restoration of an unspotted soul :
And is that all ? Is that the total dole
That Heaven demands of mortals in return
For promise of immutable immortality ?
If more there is, then surely our totality
Would be connatural with the state of gods,
And we should tread on stars, not ruts and clods ?
Instead we tread, the most, on middle air
Walking 'twixt jubilation and despair.
So Psyche trod, those surging waves of thought
That bind the mind within a net ; there caught
As some small bird within the fowler's snare,
It blindly struggles, terror and panic tear
With horrent torments reason shred by shred,
Until the thoughts incapable from dread
Give up their functions—inspiration comes,

The tangle breaks, the frayed and broken thrums
Now ample exit give.

But Psyche, yet
Could not her tumults or her doubts forget,
And sweet remembrance of past years did steal
Into her heart, again she longed to feel
Her father's kiss and see her childhood's home
And once again amongst its pleasures roam.
And once again move down the city street,
Watch the home-coming of her father's fleet,
Speed the huntsmen quitting for the chase,
Or crown the victor of some chariot-race.
And with what joy would she have loved to tell
Her grieving parents she did 'live, and well ;
Embraced her sisters, speaking all her bliss
Of her first loving and her primal kiss.
“ If with my raiment I might curtain up
The lattice when bright dawn with golden cup
Spills molten wine on ebon floor of night,
Shedding the first faint flush of virgin light,
Mayhap then through the morn my Lord will stay,
And I shall see his likeness in the day.
Ah ! once I heard of some full-magic spell
That brings to earth the souls from darkest Hell ;
If but my lips could form those secret terms
Of that smooth sorcery where incense burns,
I might bring back unto myself my Lord
Where'er he roams, anigh or far abroad,

“ And in a burst of roses I might see
The king and idol of my ecstasy.
Instead, from earliest prime, the livelong hours
I wait for even’s dew ; and when those flowers,
Those purple gentians, close their petals tight,
I raise a happy hymn to holy night.
Oh, butterflies, oh lend to me your wings
That I might follow, when the first bird sings,
My lover in his mystery-flight away,
Follow and love him all the gleeful day ; . . .
Since he plays sun, to me, I heliotrope will play ! ”
Cupid, returning at the shut of eve,
By her sad sighs her sorrow did perceive ;
And with foreknowledge, gift of every god,
Knew well grim Fate with her divining-rod
Would seek the wells of all his happiness,
And drain them dry of their sweet sappiness.
So he stern warning to his mistress gave
That if she would her sure contentment save
From jealous Fate and all her perverse crew
Unto this promise she must e’er prove true :
Never to seek to know his outward form,
Lest she should wreck their joy in hideous storm,
Never to seek again her kith and kin,
And e’er this fairy haven keep within.
All this she promises with ready smile
Since he was there her yielding to beguile.
And then in prophecy he warns her how

Her sisters, wandering to the mountain's brow,
Will wail aloud distraught with utter grief,
Thinking her dead, and, led by this belief,
Will from the towering mountain-top lament,
Praying the gods some message may be sent
Giving them tidings of their sister's fate.
He begs her if she hears their wailing cries
Not from her hidden chamber to arise,
But keep close shrouded, nor go forth at all ;
Lest both from their high happiness should fall,
And sharp destruction spreading his uncouth pinions
Their temple storm with his remorseless minions.
Thus did he tell, and she whilst he was there
Deemed nothing lived that could their bliss impair.
Anon the sun arose and Eros fled
Leaving sweet Psyche sleeping in her bed :
Barely awake fresh terrors filled her heart
That she from all her erstwhile friends must part.
Then tears fell fast and dimmed her lovely eyes,
The silences were broken by her cries,
Nor would she eat nor bathe nor lift her head
With grief consumed, up from the rumbled bed ;
But thus all day lamented on her fate,
Calling herself a prisoner desolate,
A butterfly entrapped in crystal cage,
A dewdrop held in bondage by a mage ;
So thus her husband found her when that he,
Early returning to his empery,

Into his arms with infinite tenderness
Lifted her up, and in a mute caress
Unto his breast enfolded rapturously.
Kissing his lips and eye-lids languorously,
She hung there, drooping, sensitive, mobile.
And thus in tranced silence stood awhile
The sweetest pair of lovers earth has known,
Immortal Soul—Immortal Love, alone!
And all the earth was hushed and all the sea,
Creation stood in dumb expectancy,
Whether 'twas love who ruled the inmost soul
Or inmost spirit that did love control.

And then at length he spake and faintly said :
“ My own beloved, the blossom of my heart,
The tiny star that lighteth all mine art,
Divinely mine, mine solely, mine alone,
How can I best for these chill tears atone ?
What lieth in my power that I may do
To quench this flood, and sweetly comfort you ?
For, if you weep, then all the world must weep.
'Tis my revenge ; for I have power to keep
The whole of earth in tumult or in song.
So, if you weep, all humans taste the thong
Of my un pitying whip, then tears will flow
Enough to wash the world to Hell below,
And mighty wars will rage, if Psyche cries,
And all the human race will lose their eyes

" Washed clean away by their unceasing tears,
 That shall outnumber far the world's full years ! "

" Ah ! lover, lover, guardian of mine heart,
 How I adore thee ! Why, love, should we part
 By night or day ? ah ! ever thus entwine
 Your amaranthine locks with locks of mine !
 Psyche no longer weeps, for he is there,
 Her sun, her god, her life the soul to cheer !
 Why need'st thou flee from me at early dawn ?
 Why must thy bride of daylight-love be shorn ?
 Why may I never see thy loving face ?
 Why ne'er behold those lips I now embrace ?
 Oh ! wert thou like a gorgon, I could gaze
 Upon those eyes, whose dreaded flashings glaze
 Whate'er they strike with a chill stony skin
 That drieth up the limpid life within.
 Oh, mine own honey-king, oh mine own lord,
 But speak me yea, but say that blissful word ! "

So she beguiled him, with her childish guile
 By her soft tenderness, and lips that pass
 Over his neck ; as wind flows over grass.
 Anon he spoke and half in sorrow said :

" My precious flower ! although it be with dread,
 I promise this, to-morrow thou shalt see
 Thy sisters twain, yea, they shall visit thee,
 And Zephyrus, my servant, shall bare down
 Upon his vap'rous back, from mountain's crown
 Their guileful selves, for guileful, sweet, they are,

“ And come but here to dim our lustrous star.
Nor be thou too attentive to their wish,
For, if thou art, all this our life will vanish.
And if thou ever seek'st, as they will bid,
My form to see, that from thine eyes is hid,—
For they are mortal whilst I am divine,
Our fate is sealed by cyphers adamantine,
With thou an exile from my love and me—
A storm-tossed ship upon an angry sea !
But if in patience thou wilt yet endure
Thy lot with me awhile, and so our love immune
From vile attacks, thy child a god shall be,
And thy self gain sweet immortality,
When from these mundane trials thou hast uprisen, free.”
Psyche, all joyous, promised what he bade
Should in the temples of her heart be laid,
And ever in remembrance she would hold
His counsels, and the warnings he foretold.
Yet Cupid's thoughts were heavy ; well he knew
What mischief must befall ; since few are true
To promises ; no matter how much love
They bear the one to whom fulfilments prove
Even the very soul of life itself.
There lies in every heart a hidden delf
Where Falseness breeds as some foul canker-worm,
And in the very core of Truth its sperm
Is hatched to wreck the tender, glowing fruit,
Poisoning and blighting e'en the deepest root

Of the great Tree of Life ; whose branches spread
Where'er the quickening light of sun is shed.
Though Psyche answered of her loving choice—
Even as echo answers to the voice,
Yet gaunt forebodings hedged about his brain
And wracked his amorous heart with quivering pain.
“ And they will come,” he murmurs, “ They will come
Like hideous bats into our aery home !
And thee, divinest of all earthly daughters,
As peacocks try to rape from tranquil waters
The glimmering moon, on some soft summer night,
Thee, with foul tales and baleful lies will fright,
And, in their jealousies, will spoil our young delight.”

III. SISTERS

ELDEST SISTER :

- “ Oh ! cruel and ingrate, Unprofitable Fortune !
Oh ! harsh and unutterable mother of Fate !
Thee, on my knees did I oft-times importune
To look on and pity mine humble estate.
But thou in thy malice hast chosen to bless
Our sister Psyche, regarding thee less
Than the leaves of the trees ; who with thee commune
Through the wind that thou sendest against them in hate.
- “ We three of one womb, and Psyche the last,
The youngest, the humblest, the palest, the fool !

“ And yet in her lap thou hast copiously cast
More riches, more powers than she knows how to rule !
Oh ! hideous Fortune, oh, scurrilous hag !
Hast thou aught for me on that ominous crag
Where a fire-spitting dragon, all slimy and vast,
Should have come and devoured our frail little fool ?

“ Are we who are palmed off on barbarian kings,
Living as exiles from parents and home,
To stand by and watch her possess rarer things
Than Dives himself ; though her husband may roam
As a god o'er the world, as a king of all earth
To bring to her feet whatever of worth
From this globe, or from hell, or from heaven outsprings,
And to pile them in heaps till they reach to the dome ?

“ Her husband a god ! See what that portends !
As his loving increases and grows more inflamed,
He will make her a goddess ! What terror impends
O'er my soul ! 'Tis at this our Psyche has aimed !
Those voices attendant, that music unseen !
Are those then the rights of a mere earthly queen ?
I tell you, I tell you as each sun descends
We are slowly more humbled, more crippled, more maimed !

“ Did'st thou not see by the flash of her eye,
Her haughty demeanour, the pride in her gait,

“ That she to the powers immortal was nigh,
Already a creature of eternal estate !
Already a goddess with a god for a mate !
And look at my husband ! His bald, glossy pate ;
Older than father ; a miser ! . . . But I
Still more pity thee, dear, and thy sorrowful fate ! ”

SECOND SISTER :

“ 'Tis not for myself, my darling, I grieve,
So much as for thee, oh dear sister of mine ;
Myself, I could scarcely more horror conceive
Than to marry a husband whose birth was sublime :
Though my consort, believe me, is nought but one ache,
I'm no wife but a sick-nurse . . . despite this mistake,
Which to Fortune, as thee, I attribute and leave,
I grudge her no husband ; 'tis for wealth that I pine.

“ It tortures my heart, it wracks me with pain,
That she all alone should such treasures enjoy,
Not even attempting such wealth to attain
She is piled up with riches by the slip of a boy,—
As she told us,—with down scarcely grown on his cheek,
Who at dawn goeth forth some wild hunting to seek !
But here lies the knot, how best we may gain
Her treasures, and what are the means to employ ?

“ Did'st mark with what meanness, how grudging her way,
She gave us these few, paltry gifts from her store ;—

“ How unceremoniously hustled away
We were, on the back of that harsh-whistling blore ?
I swear by old Pluto, I'll wrest from her yet
All her wealth ; yea, by Hell she shall live to regret
This husband of hers and this royal display,
If thou too art a woman, help ruin this whore !

“ We at least are respectably married, and live
With our betrothed husbands,—not richly mayhap,
But free of all gossip and the inquisitive,
Uncomfortable tales, that mystery enwrap.
No need have we to lie hid in deep vales,
Our lives to immune from mysterious tales :
Nor of ghost-owls for slaves ; since just as responsive
Are the more fleshly mutes that round my table flap.

“ Now, sister, my counsel to thee I'll unfold,
To none let us tell of our shame and our wrong,
This tale must remain for ever untold
Both to parents and kinsmen ; for they too ere long
Would visit her secrets ; and none are so rich
They do not want more, and added to which
None truly enjoy the wealth that they hold
If the knowledge they own is shared by the throng.”

ELDEST SISTER :

“ Thy words and thy counsels I wholly commend,
Then unto our parents with tears let us go

“ And 'twixt sighings and sobbings with cunning pretend
No trace have we found of our sister. With woe
Deceitfully feigned let us tear at our tresses,
Beat loud on our breasts, rend open our dresses.
Then treasures safe hid, our steps we must wend
To our homes, and there plot the girl's overthrow ! ”

SECOND SISTER (*embracing the eldest and speaking low*) :

“ Oh, my sweet and beloved sister !
How glad am I of thy subtle aid,
Together we will prick this blister
That happiness unhappy made.
And if it so be that she die
WE have but rid society
Of a foul creature, sinister,
That out of danger safe is laid.”

CUPID (*pacing along the shore alone in meditation*) :

“ Oh, tortured shadow of a waning dream,
Why com'st thou now with thy thin wilted face
Thrusting thy visage, a shuddering disgrace
Amongst my roses, casting on the stream
Of my ineffable happiness, reflection
Abhorrent in its making ;
Image of death forsaking

“ His mother Sin in her dejection
Thou throwest with thyself upon the stream.

“ What dubious portent doth thy appearance tell,
Thou snake ! thou inglorious king of all the snakes !
Glittering and gleaming coiled amongst the mandrakes
Of the once happy garden of my heart, whose deepest hell
Thou stirrest into innumerable flames
That upward spring and choke my laughing whims !
Within the ancient corridors of my soul fear dims
The starry lights, whispering a thousand names
Of terrors fresh released from nether hell.

“ Am I the God of Love to feel thy incisive sting
Probing my entrails ? Thee, whom mortals greet as **DREAD**,
I, who am quite immortal, dreamed as dead
In powers pernicious to my prospering !
And yet thy disastrous presence haunts mine hours
And shakes the blossoms from my aerial trees,
Whilst in my empty chalice lie the lees
Of thy gall-wine distilled from poison-flowers
That thou hast culled against my prospering !

“ What have thy unhinged lips to hiss at me ?
What stealthiness to imbreathe in mine ear ?
Be swift then, ruinous shadow, outspit thy fear
And flood my soul with thy envenomed sea !
Speak ! or away and feed thine uncouth flock of ravens

“ That croaking sit and gloat within thy caves,
Cowering that odious crew of pitiable slaves
That creep around thee ; those pallid cravens
That outward stream from hell’s too prospering sea ! ”

DREAD :

“ Not as thy arrows, Cupid, are thy taunts,
Nor as the flashing javelins of thine eyes,
Though thou may’st cast them forth in war-like guise !
’Twas thou that bad’st me leave my ancient haunts,
Thou hast the power to summon and dismiss
Me and my slaves, Doubt, Apprehension, Fear ;
’Tis at thy bidding now that we appear
And come to knock upon thy doors of bliss,
Quitting with muffled steps our twilight haunts.”

APPREHENSION :

“ I bring with me the mirror of thy mind
In which uprise two figures, grim and grey,
And well thou knowest them, and know their way
Tends to thy home, and ’neath them the South Wind
His windy pinions spreads, and at thy door
Gently he puts them down, and all the while
Their faces wear a painted mask of guile
The nether features hiding : stains of gore
Are on their feet and smiling is the Wind ! ”

CUPID :

“ The blood is theirs, the blood is theirs, I swear ! ”
Then silence fell, and Apprehension fled
And on his heels fast followed his master Dread ;
And Fear alone remained, and creeping where
Poor Cupid stood, he whispered in his ear,
Hideous, insidious counsels, bade him leave
Psyche abandoned :—“ ALONE ! let her conceive . . . ”
Love drew his bow—the arrow sped—struck Fear !
Who with a piercing shriek, vanished in air !

Cupid returns to Psyche.

CUPID to PSYCHE :

“ Beloved child, of moon-beam’s limpid streams,
Beloved kiss, of wind on summer flower,
Beloved pool, of love where sunlight gleams,
Beloved hour
In which each fleeting second is a kiss,
In which each kiss is of sweet nectar filled,
Frail image of irradiant iris,
From light distilled !

“ Psyche, my dew-bathed rose of Paradise,
If truly thou lov’st me, as I believe,
Then list unto the counsels I advise
And to them cleave.

“ Within the tender keeping of thy womb
Thou hast a child in semblance like to thee,
That as a flower celestial soon shall bloom
Freed of mortality :

“ But if my secret thou shalt seek to solve,
Mine aspect strive to see before thy time,
This atom half immortal will dissolve,
Before its prime,
Into a mortal child, and we shall be
Reft of our godly issue and the bloom
Of this our bliss and our felicity :
Thyself its doom.

“ Fortune her forces gathers from afar
To set in dark array against our love :—
For those two hawks, thy sisters, seek to mar,
Poised high above,
The sun-bright countenance of our sweet day ;
And even now approach with subtle scheme
To work our ruin and our love’s decay,
To end our dream.

“ Wherefore, my Psyche, now for the last time,
The very last, before the storm may break,

“ I beg thee e'er their plot may reach its prime,
For our child's sake—
Neither give ear nor utterance to aught
That binds our lives together as in one ;
Of what they say of me, believe thou nought,—
Then, Paradise is won ! ”

1917-18.

BOOK III

FELICITY AND DOUBT—*continued*

I. DOUBT

PSYCHE (*soliloquising, having been persuaded by her sisters
that she is to shortly become the mother of a monster*) :

“ HAVE I then watched in vain for the bright springing
Of my too eager happiness, my dream
To break where nightingales are singing
Neath the moon's beam ?
Have I then dreamed in vain that the glad breaking
Of my too poignant, passionate desires
Would find attendant on their waking
A crown of briars ?
Have I then woke to find my roses drooping,
Their petals spilled and withered on the floor,
And o'er the blooms a shadowy figure stooping,
A watcher of Hell's door ?
And muffled footsteps shuffling up the stair
Of Time and his harsh train of sable Hours

“ Creeps on the ears, and with him Care,
To pluck my flowers.
See ! how enchantment dies, whilst in the dust
Lies all the mellowed feelings of my love,
And like to flesh that finds its grave in lust
The gods above
Would seem to crumble in their passions fire,
To sink impotent and tarnished in the slough
Of love’s communion grown but a funeral pyre
To what ere now
Gleamed a transcendent multitude of light,
Holding the mastery o’er life and death,
A rainbow bridge betwixt the day and night,
A quickening breath !
Most merciful mother, sweet rose of Heaven’s field,
Grant me the boon of death and let me hide
My wretchedness in sleep, since I must yield
Unto a tide
Of horrors prodigious and unmatched for shame,
Slave of a monster, mother of a fiend,
Burning within me with infernal flame.
Frail was I wean’d
On milk, not blood nor fire, that I should give
Birth to a fleshly child whose nature lay
Akin to mine, who at my breasts might live
Some future day.
Now must I do a deed more harsh and wild
Than nightmares can unto the mind unfold,

“ Murder a husband but to save a child
Of uncouth mould ;
The offspring of a hideous monstrous snake,
Some basilisk abortion, full of pits
And warts and scales, whose baby locks will shake
Slim coils that spit
Foul venom from their rank and serpent throats,
Nor will the eyes shine bright as summer pools,
But will be glazed and glint as stagnant moats
Where lava cools.
Yet must I do this thing, though my poor hand
Would happier be in feeding these white doves,
These flowers of innocence whose petals fanned
The Queen of Loves :
Oh ! heart of mine, be strong, oh, hand, be firm
To strike the enemy, to slay the foe ;
And when I near the end of the fixed term
To life I owe,
Let not remorse sit heavy on my soul,
Outwitting Sleep and all his sweet combine,
And may some sweetness still lie in the bowl
Of bitter wine,
Oh ! heart of mine, be strong, nor, hand, relent,
Until the fated stroke be soothly made,
Nor tenderer will of mine with love repent ; . . .
I am afraid ! ”

Psyche, watching over Cupid sleeping, has disobeyed Cupid's commands and has lit the lamp at the bedside. On seeing the beauty of her lover and on realising who he is, she is overcome ; and begins addressing Nature, the mother of all mysteries, in a kind of ecstasy.

“ Sigh, languidly, O dew-filled peony, sigh !
Who in thy amorous breast repose my love
Fondling his form so fair,
Dulcet sway
With merriment in gentle play
Fresh in the morning air !
Whilst rose-blown froth doth vagrant stray
Heralding light,
Dawn's vermeil diadem crowns slothful night !
O, gentler yet thy tongues press 'gainst his thigh !
Kiss softer yet those flowered breasts above !
Moisten his unsmoothed hair
With dewy spray,
And on those pouting corals lay
Sleek petals, cool and bare ;
Stem not Apollo's passioned ray
That fain would bite
Those creamy shoulders in such hot delight !
And thou, pale privet flower of virile June,
Throw down thy glory, compassing his path,

“ Scenting his silvern feet
That pass
Scattering the dawn-pearls of the grass,
Latent as fairy sleet
In one vast glimmering, shimmering mass—
An argent sea
O'er which he treads in his divinity !
O PAN, pipe thou some soft, seducing tune,
Strange melodies culled from thy natal hearth,
So his awaking greet :
Let them surpass
All song ; that, charmed, the hour-glass
May run not half so fleet,
May each grain fatter grow, more gross, more crass,
More neighbourly ;
And so, more loving, drop more tardily.
O, pamp'ring winds enfold his virgin form
Lest too much love should hold the curious eye,
Seeing such beauty rare !
Lest the rose
Lose her vermilion, fainting close
In immutable despair.
See ! how the lily would repose
On him her head,
In his more lily arms herself embed !
No sea such tempest knows nor mightier storm
As doth my heart when he is passing by ;
No flame can fiercer flare,

“ More animose,
- Than that which I within enclose
In my heart’s sacred care :
Which like a ravening Fury goes
All senses through ;
To whom the very fires of love pay due.
Sigh, languidly, O fragrant violets, sigh !
Who loving scent the sandals of my love ;
Perfume his form so fair,
Fair and gay,
With dulcet laughter and gentle play
Languid in even’s air ;
When filmy veils of misty grey
Curtain the light
- With sable raiment of dissolving night.”

1919.

II. DESOLATION

Cupid has forsaken Psyche after her disobedience. She is now wandering in search of him and has become lost in a wood.

PSYCHE :

“ O ! that some necromancer would arise and bear me
upward to the tranquil skies,
Gently to lay me in cool cloudy bed, my soul entranced on
dream-dew honey fed :
Thence might mine eyes look forth and momentary see

" Those bold, half-hidden hills enfold Futurity,
 Whose crested summits spire above the clouds grey giants
 cloaked in foamy, niveous shrouds,
 Heads dead-asleep and drowsy with the air stirring the ramage
 of their forest hair :
 There let the stars with sweet simplicity
 The nights bedeck for my felicity,
 And down the silvern petalled pathway stream all the
 phantastic figures of a dream,
 Each bearing in the hand a crystal cup whence fleeting
 Fancies fitfully might sup,
 To each a casket filled to fullest measure
 Of some still secret treasured fruit of pleasure.
 And let the dreaming dragon of the dawn lie cumbent till
 the sky of stars is shorn,
 Until transparent veils of limpid light translucent float
 across lithe limbs of night ;
 Then shall th' indomitable army of the Sun
 With flaming bandrols thwart the Heavens run,
 Before whose face the sable hosts shall flee flooding with light
 the vernal scenery,
 And every flower and bird shall lift its head, fresh with the
 morn, from out its pearly bed . . .
 The dappled grass shall gleam with diamond dew ;
 Whilst I, belov'd, shall dream I wake with you !
 Shall dream I wake within those ardent arms, a willing prey
 unto thy boyish charms ;

" A slave and meek, yet free to be a slave, and so to live
 until I seek a grave
 Wherein to rest and dream in rapt severity,
 With Philomel to soothe my soul's temerity—
 Shall rest and dream, my dream shall be thy rest, so by thy
 sleep my spirit shall be blest,
 And thus in death thy love I yet may share, since thou lov'st
 sleep and sleep will be my care ;
 So shall the breath that bears my life away
 Give back to me what is my life to-day.
 And yet to-day is but an afterglow of what hath been and
 what must ever flow
 An endless river through my stricken heart, of which thine
 own is but the greater part,
 For thou didst from my heart and soul remove
 The greatlier portion, since my will was " Love."
 No will had I to will it otherwise, since Love did love my will
 to be his prize,
 So since it was my love to love Love's will, I love that all my
 will will be Love's still :
 Thus for an age unending I shall be
 A slave to love though Love himself is free.
 And in such freedom Love by love is bound to love his slave
 who bondage freedom found,
 And finding Love's to be a freeborn slave, greedy of bondage
 for my chains I crave,
 Since by them am I bound in soul to thee
 Though thou my wistful love doth widely flee.

“ O ! that some pitying angel would arise and bear my soul
aloft unto thine eyes,
And lay me by thee in thy rosy bed, still in thy love to be
apparelled. . . .

The vision's past ! . . . and I but wake to find
Heart sore oppressed and all the world unkind ! . . .
Mad waves with eager haste devouring rocks !—each wasted
wave rebounds, and ocean mocks !

Mad thoughts with awful zest desiring Love !—each abject
thought expires, nor doth Love move !

Sad midst the hollow shadows of night-hue,
A cries goes forth : “ Love's fugitive as dew ! ”

As faint as candle flame against the wind am I now Love
'gainst love has set his mind :

Has all-but flickered out the feeble flame

That bade me after death breathe out his name,

My love for thee doth live as that small scarlet flower which
patient waits to greet the midday hour,

Then full of grateful longing lifts its face, and in the glorious
radiance spills its grace :

So too my hopes of union sleep till death,

And all my loves sleep on till Cupid cometh !

And this my consolation and my solace : this globe we
tread is but a resting-place,

A halting-ground in our eternity, a hostel on our way
itinerary :

No shore encompasses Life's bitter sea,

No strand binds Death's undying destiny.

“ All things seem dreams, or else we dream them so ; 'tis in a
dream from death to life we go,
For meeting is the source of separation, and deaths of births,
and birth regeneration :
So we in sundry circles ceaseless move,
Gyrating round the poles of Life and Love,
Until such time as we our essence prove to be devoted to the
powers above ;
Then do we grow part-essence of the whole commingled with
the one Almighty Soul.
The fallen flower may not to bough return,
The ashen ember ne'er with fire reburn ;
So with the body, garment of the soul ; the cloth is worn,
wilted the human stole.
The wind of Death down-scatters many a flower and sallow
cloud across the moon's glad bower,
And no joy lasts ; yet sorrow may not reign
For ever o'er a heart that Love hath ta'en :
O ! that my Love had held my heart for e'er, and my poor
spirit knew not of despair ;
Then would no song of rillet's leaps and bounds seem sad to
me as distant music sounds,
Summoning visions, of the ghosts of dreams
Of lives long lived, in half-forgotten themes.
Myself, I seem in night's more darklier glade, just some such
visionary shadow of a shade,
An empty sleep as colourless as rain, a spectre cursed with the
soul of Pain.

“ Yet, much might I seek peace among the dead
As tempt to twist the sand to golden thread !
And still the flowerets bloom, though suffering lies a thunder-
cloud upon my maiden eyes,
The bees that hover o’er the clover field, still joyful music to
the eddies yield . . .
O ! come, O gentle spirit, pitying come,
And all the poignancy of memories numb ! ”

1917-18.

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