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THE WORLD THAT GOD DESTROYED  
AND OTHER POEMS



THE WORLD THAT GOD  
DESTROYED

AND OTHER POEMS

By

FREDERICK E. PIERCE



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TO THE MOST PATIENT  
AND LOVING OF ALL MY CRITICS  
MY SISTER MARY

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## TO THE READER

Out of the lone New England hills,  
Where fields are rocky and hearts are stern,  
Where there's much to suffer and much to learn,  
And men build visions no God fulfills;

Out of the haunted elms of Yale,  
Where hopes have budded and friendships leaved,  
And the spirit in which her sons believed  
Fired hero's effort and poet's tale;

Out of a hope that perhaps was vain;  
Out of a dream that he ne'er will rue,—  
Reader, the author speaks to you  
In a world of wonder and joy and pain.



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THE WORLD THAT GOD DESTROYED  
AND OTHER POEMS





# THE WORLD THAT GOD DESTROYED

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## PROLOGUE

### THE EVE OF THE DELUGE

The sun sank palled in dread;  
Birds hushed on bough;  
"God is a myth," men said,  
As men do now.  
Beneath the Eternal's frown  
Loud reveled king and clown;  
Blood flowed in field and town,  
None questioned how.

The dripping chaplet tied  
The harlot's brow;  
Grave statesmen planned and lied,  
Secure as now.  
As lions, drowsing, seem  
To hunt in hungry dream,  
Purred the great ocean stream  
Round cape and prow.

Night came; no face was pale;  
No prayer, no vow.  
God stood behind the veil,  
As He does now.  
Strange tints the heaven tinged,  
Like light from doors unhinged;  
And the wild panther cringed,  
And bird on bough.

Bards harped in halls impure;  
Slaves forged the plow;  
Earth dreamed she should endure  
As long as now.  
Next morning swam the whale  
O'er throne and altar-rail.  
'Twas an old Hebrew tale;  
But read it, thou.

ACT I.

TIME. The morning before the Deluge.

PLACE. A hill near the ark, commanding a view over the plain to the east and the city of Cain in its midst.

[*Enter Noah and a friend.*]

NOAH. There, kinsman, slow, like God's reluctant wrath,  
Comes the last dawning of a world.

FRIEND. 'Tis calm,  
As mild as mercy's front. For men so long  
Cherished, forgiven, warned, and spared in vain,  
'Twill neither warn nor spare.

NOAH. Is Javan come?

FRIEND. Last night his horsemen signaled from  
the plain;  
An hour will bring him.

NOAH. Bold was he to linger  
So far from home beneath the threat of Heaven.

FRIEND. Sad news will wait him; he loved Irad  
dearly.

NOAH. So did we all. Alas, the boy!

[*Enter attendant.*]

ATTENDANT. My chief.

NOAH. Your errand, sir?

ATTENDANT. An embassy from Nod.

NOAH. From Nod to-day! What irony works in  
heaven

To send them here to-day? What mission draws  
them?

Well, bring them hither. Will it not seem uncanny  
To treat with dying states on doomsday morning?

FRIEND. And hear them roar as lions do, when,  
scratched

With poison darts, they're doomed and know it not.

*[Enter Tubal-cain with a splendid retinue.]*

TUBAL. I bring you greetings from the land of  
Nod.

NOAH. In the same will and temper we return  
them.

Wherein can Noah serve the sons of Cain?

TUBAL. In yielding them their own, too long  
unclaimed.

You hold a boy called Irad, one of us,  
Ten moons detained as hostage here, a boy  
Whom much we learned to love. We'd have him  
back;

And therefore am I come.

NOAH. Is Irad yours

Because Cain's daughter bore him, Cainite homes

Misled his years till manhood? Nay, his sire

Was my own brother, and his blood was ours.

Nor held we him as hostage; his free will

Made him prefer his father's people here,  
 Adopted, not detained. And would to God  
 I had no more to tell.

TUBAL.

Ay, so you say.

Lies nestle green beneath a hoary beard  
 Like wheat beneath a snowdrift. Bring him here;  
 And see if, when the road lies open plain  
 To Nod, he'll feel adopted.

NOAH.

Not so fast.

Love held him here with golden threads; now here  
 Will justice chain him. Dread has been the fruit  
 Of your ill schooling and his mother's blood.  
 The curse of Cain has found his child through you.  
 Enoch, my kin, is dead by him you seek.

TUBAL. Yea, so we heard and therefore came.

What then?

Revenge is for the strong and not for you.  
 Yield up the boy; or, by the serpent's head  
 That lost us Eden, to-morrow you shall hear  
 Our Cainite javelins rattling through your tents.  
 A dreadful day 'twill be.

NOAH.

Dreadful indeed.

Thou canst not dream what little cause have I  
 To fear thy wrath to-morrow, nor what Arm  
 Shall be my proxy working death on thee.  
 Vaunt on; I dread thee not.

TUBAL.

Then hark again.

My horsemen hold a captive down below,  
 Your youngest son, your Javan, taken but now,

Surety for Irad's life. To-morrow's sun,  
 If it see Irad on these hills with you,  
 Sees Javan down with us.

NOAH. To-morrow's sun  
 See Javan there! Eternal God forbid!

TUBAL. Or him or Irad; choose.

NOAH. Bring Irad hither.

[*Exit attendant.*]

FRIEND. Droop not; God works in this. Per-  
 chance last night

We judged too gently; blood demandeth blood.

NOAH. Let him not die red-handed! Lord of  
 Nod,

How say you if the boy refuse to go,  
 Of his own choice remain?

TUBAL. In dreams I see him.

NOAH. But if he do, shall Javan then be free?

TUBAL. If he do this, or if the burning stars  
 Turn dancing eastward, then, and not before,  
 Shall you keep both.

FRIEND. Knew he what comes to-morrow  
 He then were safe.

NOAH. He knows not, yet may stay.  
 Let God inspire his answer, God decide.

[*Enter Irad.*]

Irada, the people of the plains demand you;  
 We'd keep you still. Here part the ways: with  
 them

The false, bright glamour glittering o'er decay  
Which here you learned to loathe; with us long  
years

Of penance hard and durance, but they form  
Repentant stairs to God. Though jailers we,  
Yet friends we are to save you from yourself.  
Make public choice between us.

TUBAL. Choose, boy, choose.  
We'll back your choice up with our bones and  
brawn;  
And here's my valid signet. (*Drawing his sword.*)  
Lad, you're pale.  
They give you watery diet.

IRAD. No, I'm well,  
And glad to see your grizzled face. But this,  
What's this that I must do?

TUBAL. Our wines are flat  
Without the boy we miss. Come home with us.

IRAD. What, now?

TUBAL. Why not? What drowsy  
godliness  
Have you to pack? Come, share the wealth of  
friends.  
We feast the gods to-night.

NOAH. Decide not rashly.  
Strange things you know not are astir to-day  
Might change your choice to-morrow.

IRAD. Had you come

But yester-morning! Blood since then has flowed,  
And made me conscience' captive.

TUBAL. Let it flow.  
We were not born to bleat like lambs, my lad;  
And our o'er-zealous friend harangued too long.  
'Twas a good blow.

IRAD. Yes, with a single stroke  
I've killed one man and damned another.

TUBAL. Tut, tut!  
I have been damned for centuries and have thrived.

IRAD. I beg an hour ere answering.

TUBAL. What! so cool  
Between our love and dungeons!

NOAH. He is free,  
May go or stay. Send Javan now to us.  
Till then, my lord, you are our guest.

TUBAL. I thank you.  
I'll take a nap and sleep away the time.  
Think on old ties, my boy, think on old ties,  
Who played with you, caroused with you, and stood  
Bestriding you in battle. You'll not find  
Their like in Noah's milk-and-water saints.  
I'll see you in an hour.

[*Exit Tubal-cain and retinue. Music.*]

NOAH. What strains are these?

FRIEND. Hither they bring the dead for sunrise  
rite,  
Our last farewell.



NOAH (*to Irad*). Wilt thou withdraw?

IRAD.

I'll stay.

But tell not Javan, add not his reproach.

NOAH. He shall not know to-day.

[*Enter attendants with the body of Enoch.*]

Here lay him down.

Weep not; he journeys to eternal God.

All weakness which is flesh's heritage

Falls down like ashes burnt; and the clear fire,

Through æther leaping, seeks the sun that gave it.

Alas, my brother, yet rejoice. Farewell!

[*The Noahites move in procession around the bier,  
each laying a white wreath on it as he speaks.*]

FIRST NOAHITE. Farewell.

SECOND NOAHITE. Farewell.

THIRD NOAHITE. Farewell.

FOURTH NOAHITE. Farewell.

FIFTH NOAHITE. Farewell.

## SONG

Where shall the champion rest,

The brave, the eager,

Who filled his Lord's behest

In field and leaguer?

For him all joys are blent,  
 Long Sabbath keeping  
 Soft in Jehovah's tent,  
 Like children sleeping.

More grand than stone could rear  
 His tomb is founded,  
 The sea that wraps the sphere,  
 Blue and unbounded.

Farewell! Hard task have we  
 New worlds restoring.  
 Some day we'll rest with thee,  
 Our God adoring.

Where the great feast is spread  
 And lamps are lighted,  
 Shall we beyond the dead  
 Be yet united.

IRAD. And shall I also dare to say farewell?  
 Stern hast thou been, yet may'st relent to know  
 Who sent thee hence now mourns. Alas my deed!  
 So far from all I purposed! Is it true  
 That in my veins wells up the ancient curse?  
 Am I a thing at odds with life, akin  
 To upas-tree and tiger? Must the world  
 Kill me or die by me? In what far years  
 Did my dead fathers rob their heirs of hope,  
 Blasting their self-control?

[*Enter Javan.*]

JAVAN.                                 Where lies our dead?

NOAH. Behold.

JAVAN.                                 Can heart so fiery be so still?

Rash was thy tongue and stern, unhappy man,  
Which hath provoked too much some son of Cain.

Forgive me that in life I jarred with thee.

Rest happy and farewell.

NOAH.                                 Bear hence the dead.

And, Javan, as thou lovest Irad well,

Remain and speak with him. The Cainite lords

Wait here to bear him back.

[*Exeunt all except Irad and Javan.*]

JAVAN.                                 You play with us.

You cannot think in earnest you will go.

IRAD. Why not? The voice that calls the hom-  
ing wren

Calls me where I was born. Look down where  
stands

Cain's ancient city, while the morning hush

Descends on amphitheater, park, and dome.

There lie my mother's and my father's graves;

There lives my grandsire, Jared, weak and old,

Who calls for me in vain. There watches Adah,

My love, abruptly, cruelly left by me.

Shall these not draw me home?

JAVAN.                                 All there is evil.

Good with the good should bide, and you with us.

IRAD. Oh, never say that all in Cain is evil,—  
 That roseate glow in which prosaic life  
 Grows beautiful, imperial, strong. To-night  
 They hold their feast to Niloh, god of harvest.  
 All barriers broken, there the joy of life  
 Pours out in flood: all wealth of nature's realm,  
 In fruit or blossom or enchanting wine,  
 Or mystery of love, the whole night long  
 Observed by happy youth; all wealth of art,  
 Heaped up by lake or fountain, piled profuse  
 In dome or gallery, pouring on the ear  
 In melody to which in earth and star  
 Breath universal moves. Is Niloh evil,  
 Great source of life and life's romance as well?

JAVAN. Yet ever at his name my father frowns.  
 Wouldst thou that I should worship Niloh?

IRAD. No.

JAVAN. Why not, if he is good?

IRAD. He is not good.

That I unsay; incarnate sin is he;  
 But sin that makes all life enchanted ground.  
 'Tis virtuous winter here; and I'd be gone,  
 Like birds that migrate to the sunny south,  
 To find where rapture dwells.

JAVAN. Dwells it not here?  
 Oh, yes, all beauty, joy of youth and bard,  
 Untainted and eternal joy. But now,  
 On yonder mountain, scratched along the stone,  
 I found an old and rainbeat stave of song

Which legends tell that martyred Abel made.  
Men say he used to climb Niphates' peak,  
From whence his eye looked like an eagle down  
On the Forbidden Garden. There he drew  
The beauty of the landscape through his soul  
Like breath through nostrils; poured it out in song  
That made all life seem miracle. And more,  
Emotion warm as day and vast as night,  
Lives musical among the sons of Seth.  
Stay here with me. You taught me first to know  
The joy of being. I'll teach you in turn  
To find it on our wild and healthful hills,  
Free as in yonder city.

IRAD.

So you might,

Came memories not between. Last night I dreamed  
You stood and watched me through a bloody glass,  
And through that glass would watch me evermore,  
Seeing my face as hideous.

JAVAN.

What is this?

IRAD. A dream, no more. But dreams like this  
will come

To break my rest, while here I wait and pine  
In the dull chill of unaccustomed ways,  
A tolerated alien. And in Nod  
Foams the rich wine that makes the heart forget.  
I'll mourn thee, Javan, more than thou wilt me;  
But go I must.

JAVAN.

Now by Jehovah, no!

IRAD. Yea, lad; my will is fixed. We've long  
 been friends;  
 But now 'tis parting time.

JAVAN. So mad! Then hear  
 What still from thee we kept, a truth so dread  
 To one whose friends and kindred dwell below  
 I'd fain conceal it still. When first you came  
 Did not my father tell you earth was doomed?  
 And that tremendous ship at anchor near,  
 High on this mountain lake, a century's work,  
 Know you not why he built it?

IRAD. Yea, I know.  
 Doomsday is coming; but 'tis years away;  
 And I and mine may live, be glad, and die,  
 Ere the great Deluge swell.

JAVAN. Nay, there you err.  
 Not years nor months nor even days, but hours  
 Shall be your life in Nod. The time is now.  
 Even at this moment God's avenging Flood  
 Is gathering o'er the nations.

IRAD. You are mad!

JAVAN. Look westward where I point. Just  
 visible  
 Beyond those hilltops lies the ocean shore  
 In the blue distance. Look, do you not see  
 Strange clouds of smoky mist, that heavenward  
 Roll from the deep, and pile themselves aloft  
 Like rocks that soldiers pile on city walls  
 To hurl upon invaders? Breeze is none,

And still they stand. But with the night shall blow  
 A western wind to drive them, dark with doom,  
 O'er earth, and pouring from their cup the sea.  
 And hark; with straining ear can you not catch  
 From that same west a strange, deep, boding  
 sound?

There crack the dykes of ocean; there awakes,  
 Reluctant from the sleep of centuries,  
 A monster huger than leviathan,  
 The dim, dread deep itself. The hour has come.  
 To-day the race of Cain, the land of Nod,  
 Rejoice at Niloh's knee. At dawn to-morrow  
 Race, god, and country, all that glittering life,  
 Its beauty, blasphemy, and glory, and sin,  
 Shall pave the ocean bottom. There from the west,  
 Where break the fountains of the deep, and loom  
 The freighted clouds of judgment, even now  
 Comes God to cleanse His world.

IRAD.

Eternal Powers!

JAVAN. At noon must all embark, the doors be  
 sealed.

And all on whom those doors shall close, all life,  
 Man, bird, or animal, or crawling snake,  
 Is doomed. You shall not go!

IRAD.

Oh, stand aside!

Leave me to my own thoughts!

*[Javan withdraws to the side of the scene.]*

Is this a dream?

There's not one thing in field or town or air  
 But seems as it hath seemed ten thousand times  
 In life's untroubled course. The face of heaven,  
 Oft called the countenance of the Living God,  
 Appears one kindly smile. And far and near  
 With such infectious confidence move on  
 The race of men, what heart can help but feel  
 With them that all is well! Worlds should not die  
 Puffed out like candles, blown away like mist.  
 Yet one I trust declares it so from Heaven.  
 O God, if God Thou art, is it not terrible  
 To think old homes and ties, ancestral graves,  
 Friends once beloved, those landmarks where our  
     lives  
 Took root and grew, should mix with ocean mud;  
 And all we worshiped, loved, and lived for, be  
 One blank of waters! Never, never, never!  
 Heaven would not be so stern. Men mark alone  
 The tilted scale; God knows what mountain loads  
 Of human goodness tugged the wavering beam  
 With earth's tremendous guilt. It cannot be!  
 Be merciful, be merciful, O God!

*[He throws himself on his face and is silent. Then  
 after a pause he speaks again.]*

Suppose it true, shall I in Noah's ark  
 Crouch like a dog while friend and kinsman drown?  
 There watch the corpse of Adah drifting by,  
 Her hair afloat like sea-weed, and her bosom



Nosed by the shark; and when the Flood goes down,  
 Serve aliens o'er my dead, while from his tomb  
 Enoch shall haunt my sleep?

[*Enter Tubal-cain.*]

Oh, is it you?

Come, brother spirit, you can laugh at death,  
 Given or received. Come, and we'll laugh together.  
 One whole long day of joy is ours; away!

JAVAN. Irad, where go you?

IRAD. Where my people are.  
 Into the joy of one last Niloh's feast,  
 Into the night where dim oblivion dwells,  
 And guilt has peace; where my hot murderer's  
     heart  
 May sleep as quiet as my great father Cain's!  
 Sorrow to sorrow calls, and crime to crime;  
 And theirs I am for earth and for all time!

[*He rushes away.*]

TUBAL. His choice is made. Adieu.

JAVAN. One question first.  
 Enoch is dead.

TUBAL. I know it.

JAVAN. Know it! How?  
 Were you his murderer?

TUBAL. Think so if you will.  
 I'll ne'er object.

JAVAN (*turning from him*). His blood is on  
your soul.

Forgive me, Irad, what I dared to think.

(*Calling*) Wait, friend, one moment!

TUBAL. Youngster, not so fast.  
You stir not hence a step till he is safe  
O'er yonder boundary where my horsemen wait.

JAVAN. Ruffian, I'll dog thy flight but he shall  
hear.

TUBAL. Good friend, you are too young to  
loathe your life.  
Take my advice and bide on Noah's ground.  
There's danger yonder.

JAVAN. What fiend made you so strong?

TUBAL. He mounts and rides; they wait for  
me. Farewell.

[*Half draws his sword with a menacing gesture,  
and exit.*]

JAVAN. Gone, gone!

[*Enter a Noahite.*]

NOAHITE. Is Irad fled?

JAVAN. Fled to his doom.

NOAHITE. God's will is hard.

JAVAN. At friendship's call he dies.  
Shall I do less? Look there! Against the dawn  
How high towers Himenay o'er the mountains  
round!

Has God not said when seas o'er mountains flowed  
On Himenay's peak the ark should find dry land?

NOAHITE. Even so.

JAVAN. Enough! A god might stand on tiptoe,  
And yet not reach its crest to pull you down.

What think you, man?

NOAHITE. How now? Your looks are wild.

JAVAN. Go, bid them bring my horse.

NOAHITE. Ride not to-day.

At noon the doors are sealed; when that is done  
Noah's own child might knock unheard.

JAVAN. Be gone.

I shall not knock after the doors are sealed.

CURTAIN.

## ACT II.

### SCENE I.

**TIME.** The eve of the Deluge.

**PLACE.** The great square in the center of Cain's city. In the background is a statue of Niloh, the harvest god, "the reaper of delight." On one side are lofty buildings; on the other the grounds of a magnificent park. Beyond is a glimpse of the western horizon piled with strange looking clouds. The scene begins at twilight, but night gathers as it progresses. A crowd gradually forms around the pedestal of the statue.

[*Enter four gallants singing.*]

**FIRST GALLANT.**

Come, gather, friends; one more carouse,  
While stars benign in heaven house,  
And tinkling lyre and torch invite  
To taste the joy of Niloh's night.

**SECOND GALLANT.**

The darkened hours begin to bud  
On Time's old trunk for us to pull;  
Enchantment warms the lover's blood;  
The vineyard's magic tide is full.

## THIRD GALLANT.

Deem not the gods forbid to drink  
 The cup of joy they deign to brew;  
 The throned immortals laugh and wink  
 At what they would and would not view.

## FOURTH GALLANT.

Waste not what Nature ne'er renews;  
 She'll warm no more the faded flowers,  
 Nor offer twice what we refuse  
 When life and lovely youth are ours.

FIRST GALLANT. But remember before we part that you are all to come down to-morrow and share my villa in the hills. Everything which you wish shall be there at your disposal. Would you feast, we have loaded our tables with meats and wines. Would you hear musicians or see paintings, we have the best in Nod. Would you sail on the waters of Dreamland, we will launch you with lotus and poppy. Nay, if you wish, you may even find the roguish Loves playing at hide-and-seek in a corner. Gardens are there as pleasant as old Adam's Eden, and unlimited time before us to enjoy them. You'll come?

SECOND, THIRD AND FOURTH GALLANTS. We'll not forget.

SECOND GALLANT. Will the poet Iban be there?

FIRST GALLANT. He joins us later.

THIRD GALLANT. He is a genius, Iban.

FOURTH GALLANT. I preferred Bahran; he had the fire.

SECOND AND THIRD GALLANTS. Oh, no, Iban forever! What technique!

FIRST GALLANT. We start at noon to-morrow.

*(It lightens in the west.)*

*[They move on. Two corpses are borne in and halted before the shrine. Enter Javan and a Cainite.]*

CAINITE. There stands the shrine; there soon your friend must come.

JAVAN. What dead are here?

CAINITE. It is the poet Bahran.

JAVAN. He looks like Irad. Oft my cousin praised him.

Did Heaven love him that he died to-day,  
Or mark him first for wrath? What boy is this?

CAINITE. Did you not know? He was the prettiest lad.

Bahran left wife and mistress, friend and home  
For love of him, adored him, hung their chamber  
With curtains worth a province, built sweet foun-  
tains

By which they lay together.

JAVAN. Was their bond

Pure or polluted?

CAINITE. Let their foes inquire,

Their friends but say they loved. The boy died  
first.

He had the fever; Bahran watched with him;  
And when he saw the form he loved grow cold,  
He killed himself. "Nor man nor woman more  
Shall share my love," he said, and speaking died,  
His arms around his playmate.

JAVAN. Irad's Bahran.

CAINITE. His home was like a palace, and his  
gardens

The loveliest thing on earth; a nation praised him.

JAVAN. Where goes he now?

CAINITE. All night to lie in state

Within the dome. His funeral is to-morrow.

Sad day 'twill be. Adieu.

[*Exit.*]

JAVAN. He looks like one  
Whose vice entombed a dead and nobler self.

[*He stands aside. Enter a man and woman.*]

MAN. Will you not yield? It is the lovers' hour.  
Clear trills the bird of love, and twinkling beams  
The orb of lovers. I have wooed you long.  
Why was this beauty given you? Why to me  
This burning blood and power to taste delight?

WOMAN. I have a husband.

MAN. So has many a woman.  
I know a fountain welling up in stone

As fair as you. Its waves are ever sweet,  
Though more than one has tasted.

WOMAN. Ever sweet  
While tasted only. Should you plunge and wallow,  
Who'd care to drink that gentle fountain then?  
Restrained delight is dearest.

MAN. Not forever.

WOMAN. To-night my husband and myself must  
watch  
In Niloh's worship; but, beloved, to-morrow—  
Ah, then—

MAN. Oh, much will mean that word "to-  
morrow"!  
No eye shall see us where we're lying then,  
Nor any husband know.

WOMAN. And now goodnight.  
How sweet is life! And 'twill be doubly sweet  
To-morrow! (*It lightens in the west.*)

[*They pass on. Enter Irad.*]

JAVAN. My cousin Irad!

IRAD. How, misguided boy!  
What evil genius led your wanderings here  
To-night of all the years?

JAVAN. The name of friend.

IRAD. Wilt share my fortunes, then, and fly with  
me?

JAVAN. To earth's four windy corners, if you  
will.



IRAD. Look yonder where the mountains loom;  
up them

We'll climb past ocean's reach.

JAVAN.

Nay, nay, not there.

In three short days those puny peaks will be  
But rocks in ocean's bed. I've risked my life  
To show a safer way. 'Tis yonder, see,  
Up Himenay's peak; for there, as God has said,  
After the Flood the ark shall find dry land.

IRAD. That way is long, the Deluge close.

JAVAN.

No more!

Take that or nothing; lesser heights are death.

[*Enter Tubal-cain.*]

IRAD. You empty-handed too, nor found our  
friends?

TUBAL. They march in Niloh's column, this I  
learned.

We'll wait it here and meet them; better so.

IRAD. I've wasted golden hours in this pursuit  
We ill could spare, and traversed all the town,  
Home, hall, and council chamber.

TUBAL.

Well, be calm.

Long absence weaned you from our life; this tour  
Of high and low refreshed the faded lines,  
Renewed the picture.

IRAD.

Work of burning pencils

Were not more vivid. Eager everywhere

The people trod each other's heels, as though  
There were a million morrows.

TUBAL.

Well, there are.

IRAD. The lords in council voted richer hangings  
Around their hall. Near by were masons laying  
A castle's corner-stone. Beside the way  
I met three children gay as crickets dancing,  
Who, when I asked their cause of gladness, piped:  
"The holidays have come, the holidays  
Begin to-night." And one, a little maid,  
Whose face was like a blossom, cried, "To-morrow  
We'll gather Niloh's roses." Then a mother,  
With sunken face, but smiling, told a neighbor  
That now her griefs were done, her son, imprisoned  
Long years ago, would be released to-morrow.  
You would have thought the hoarded bliss of earth  
Was in that word "to-morrow."

TUBAL.

What's all this?

IRAD. I'll let thee know at dawning.

TUBAL.

Hark, the music!

'Tis Niloh's trumpet that the choristers  
Are blowing as they march. Our friends are  
coming.

*[Enter in procession the priests of Niloh, led by  
the high pontiff. They are dressed in purple  
with golden ornaments, and as emblems carry  
broken fetters. Last in the procession moves  
the blind Jared, led by another priest. They*

*circle three times around the idol, singing to music.]*

## SONG

We dwelt in the valley of thunder,  
And the Elohim sat on the edge;  
The Heavens were holding us under,  
And the lightning came down like a wedge.  
And the cherubim, armored and sworded,  
Flew sentinel, dreadful to see;  
While like misers we garnered and hoarded  
Life's treasure for ages to be.  
But Niloh came manteled in beauty  
Through the valley of woe and affright;  
He hewed down the thorn-tree of Duty,  
And planted the rose of Delight.  
Through pleasure exulting or tender  
He led us like monarchs released;  
And he housed us pavilioned in splendor,  
And placed us forever at feast.  
Let our children from cycle to cycle  
Lament that their coffers are void;  
But though Eden is guarded by Michael,  
Despite him we've lived and enjoyed.  
And our fame till the mountains are leveled,  
Like a cloud that the sunset has laved,  
Shall tell in what glory we reveled  
On the wealth that the ages had saved.

[*Irads draws aside Jared and his companion, while the other priests move on.*]

JARED. What voice is this I hear? Is it not Irad?

IRAD. Ten moons you heard it not. Is it so dear You know it now?

JARED. Ah, boy, these blind old eyes Have wept thee many an hour.

IRAD. Your blessing, sir.

JARED. All Niloh's joys and length of years be thine.

PRIEST. Your face makes summer in an old man's life. You'll feast with me to-night?

IRAD. Your pardon, sir; I've other work.

PRIEST. A-ha! this other work! Young blood, young blood! I have been young, and known What Niloh gave, the wondrous body of youth.

I am not jealous. 'Tis a sightly night; Dark clouds along the west, but clear above. How dim the stars are! What's that light that burns

Behind Orion yonder?

TUBAL. There's another Off to the north, and eastward gleams a third.

PRIEST. They come and go. There shines  
another out,  
As if a window opened in the sky  
And closed again.

JAVAN. Adown the south they gleam  
Like rents in burning walls that part and totter!

PRIEST. What mean these silent fires in open  
heaven?

TUBAL. Now I was ever a cheery augur, man.  
I deem the gods, carousing in the sky,  
Are sprawled in ecstasy, upsetting round  
Celestial torch and cresset. And if so,  
Why, we'll do what we please, and drowsy Heaven  
Be none the wiser.

JAVAN. That's a daring jest!

TUBAL. Nay, Sethite; thought so reverent never  
lit  
Thy dingy brain, devising gods of whey.  
Where the Great Reaper, girt with lambent life,  
In life's wild maelstrom which his pulses share,  
Reels on through nodding heaven and rushing star,  
There is a deity, an existence there  
Which scorns your pap and swaddling laws—  
divine!

PRIEST. The western wind blows keen. O'er  
Noah's hill  
How black the tempest heaves!

TUBAL. I'm still perverse.  
That biggest cloud, just o'er the central peak,

Appears a giant cask, that jovial gods  
 Would stave o'er earth in oceans.

IRAD.

Hark, the music!

[*Enter a chorus of Bacchantes. They wear garlands in which bunches of grapes are entwined with lotus leaves and the flowers of the opium poppy. In their hands some carry goblets of wine, others leaves of lotus or heads of poppy. They circle around the idol, singing.*]

### SONG

Which has more power,—  
 And who shall determine?—  
 Fruitage and flower,  
 Or king in the ermine?  
 Which has more use  
 To heighten life's meaning,  
 Petal and juice,  
 Or gold of thy gleaning?  
 Wrapped in the rind,  
 Instilled in the stamen,  
 More in its kind  
 Than fighter or flamen;  
 Stored in the stem,  
 Enclosed in the anther,  
 Fairer than gem,  
 And fiercer than panther;

Deeps of desire  
 And manhood amassing,  
 Focused like fire  
 On the hour that is passing;  
 Doomed by decree,  
 And falsely forbidden,—  
 Here is the key  
 Of the hoard that was hidden.  
 Bards beyond count  
 Till ages are hoary,  
 Fed from the fount,  
 Shall sing of its glory.

A BACCHANT. 'Tis Irad. Welcome, welcome  
back to Nod!

BACCHANTS. Ho, Irad, Irad, join the dance with  
us!

IRAD. No, not to-night. Comrades, farewell,  
farewell!

[*The chorus moves on. Enter a conspirator, ap-  
proaching Javan.*]

CONSPIRATOR. Hist, brother.

JAVAN. Who are you?

CONSPIRATOR. Nay, be not strange.

What will the morning prove?

JAVAN. A thing of dread.

CONSPIRATOR. Then he you are to whom they  
sent me here.

It works apace. All's ready, all in train;  
Your trumpet blown will throw a kingdom down.

JAVAN. When so?

CONSPIRATOR. At sunrise; thus 'tis understood.

JAVAN. At sunrise be it.

CONSPIRATOR. Then we'll meet again.

Laugh, giddy crowd. From mendicant to king,  
None dream but us of what the morn will bring.  
Speed, hours of night; for while ye hold the sky  
We are but men, as men may fail and die.  
But soon will dawn the wished for day, and we  
Be lords of all the land our eyes can see.

*[He moves on. Enter a chorus of poets and artists of all kinds. They bear various instruments of their different callings. In their midst on a splendid litter they carry Adah, enthroned as the Goddess of Beauty and Pleasure. They circle the idol and sing.]*

### SONG

Wherefore should art  
Upon conscience be founded,  
Searching the heart  
Like an ocean unsounded?  
Why should it point  
To a path for pursuing,  
Vainly anoint  
Eyes weary of viewing?



Art is divine  
     But softer and sweeter,  
 Lovely in line,  
     And mystic in meter;  
 Waking the nerve  
     O'er the wisdom that slumbers,  
 Graceful of curve,  
     And noble in numbers.  
 Bound in its mesh  
     Is the fay that was fleeing,  
 Joy of the flesh  
     And beauty of being.  
 Life in its bowl  
     To a drop it condenses,  
 Lulling the soul,  
     And charming the senses.  
 Vainly the years  
     Would banish or bind it;  
 Deep it inheres,  
     And the future shall find it.

*[Adah descends and places her tiara on the knee  
 of Niloh. The chorus kneel while she does  
 so, and then move on. As Adah turns away  
 from the statue she meets Irad.]*

ADAH. Whence comest thou unlooked for?

IRAD. Lo, I'm kneeling

And weeping, Adah. Thou art pale. How far  
 I sinned in flight from what I deemed as sin!

ADAH. Art thou returned? Why didst thou  
leave me so?

IRAD. I'll tell thee later, but forgive me now.

ADAH. From what fair daughter of the race of  
Seth

Com'st thou to me for change?

IRAD. No woman's face  
Has filled my heart but thine. Thy only rivals  
Were dreams that now are dead. Wilt thou for-  
give me?

ADAH. What else can woman do? Too well you  
know  
Our hearts are clay where yours are hammered  
steel.

IRAD. Are these hot drops that tremble on my  
cheek  
Like metal plummet? Do my warm lips feel  
Like chilling iron?

JARED. Clasp each other close.  
'Tis Niloh's night, and Niloh's blessing falls  
On love and lovers. I'm a gray old stump,  
But in my children's joy my youth reblossoms.

*[Enter a procession of young men and women  
marching in couples chained together with  
flowers, and accompanied by little children  
dressed as Loves. They circle around the idol,  
and sing.]*

## SONG

Why should the bee  
    Become bound if it settle,  
Whose flight might be free  
    From petal to petal?  
Why should the pear  
    Fall fresh and untasted?  
Or unbreathed be the air  
    Round the jasmine, and wasted?  
Why should we thirst  
    Among fountains for quaffing?  
Why two be accurst  
    When both might be laughing?  
Why was the sun  
    Made common and cheering  
If light we should shun,  
    Or feed on it fearing?  
Strength may decay,  
    But its uses are over;  
The puny can play,  
    And the least be a lover.  
God is ensealed  
    In the peach, as its Former;  
But more sweetly revealed  
    In what's rounder and warmer.  
Hosts have no hire,  
    And archers are idle,  
While Youth and Desire  
    Go marching to bridal.

THE MEN. Ho, Irad, Irad, clasp thy love and come!

THE WOMEN. Come, Adah, come! Ten moons thy life was cold

Because thou loved'st one, and he is here.

The night is Niloh's; clasp thy love and come!

IRAD. Stern gods forbid. Playmates, farewell, farewell!

JAVAN. Let us go hence! God comes at dawn.

IRAD.

Yea, true.

Grandfather, Tubal-cain, draw near to me.

'Tis Niloh's night when he is lord supreme;

His slightest breath we must obey as law.

But now, delivered through his aged priest,

To me his summons came. He bids us all,

Before his hour is past, in pilgrimage

To seek his temple on Mount Himenay,

A rite that all should do, that never yet

Our family have done. Our horses wait

All ready saddled, and the god commands.

Our servants are at hand, all things prepared.

Let us be gone.

JARED.

Ha, ha, impulsive boy!

Is Adah's heart so hard to reconcile,

Her love so unlike others, nought will serve

But holiest ground; and we must post all night

To find what's here at home? Come, lad, I'm old,

Unfit for such wild gallops. Niloh's orders,—

Oh, well, I know him; he's a kindly god;  
He'll wink and laugh. Be reasonable, stay here.

IRAD. I have a litter borne on horses near  
For you and Adah. Come!

ADAH. Wait here till morning.  
We'll travel warm in sunlight where the road  
Winds high above the sightly earth, and look  
For miles below us. All the land will be  
One glorious picture in the light to-morrow.  
We'd lose all this at night.

IRAD. 'Twill be a picture—  
No, let that rest. Oh, haste! What comes ere  
dawn  
Would justify a hundred times as much.

TUBAL. A storm is blowing up; look over there.  
'Twill strike us now before we reach the mountain.  
Stay here by jolly fires and good dry halls;  
Who'd wander drenched among the rainy woods  
Such nights as this will be?

JARED. Feel how the wind  
Is rushing from the west. My aching bones  
Do prophesy an evil night for them.  
There comes the thunder.

JAVAN. What a flash was that!  
It looked as if the floor of heaven were split,  
And eyes could peer beyond.

ADAH. What lights are those  
Which move like spreading cracks along the sky?  
There's something strange abroad. O Irad, stay!

IRAD. By heaven, I've reasons such as ne'er were  
man's.

We race with death. On, ere that tempest come!

TUBAL. We are not children; give us reasons  
why,

And I'll ride with you to the devil's jaws.

Without them I'll not budge.

IRAD.

Are we alone?

TUBAL. No soul but us.

IRAD. Then listen. As I reached the town  
to-day,

Kneeling in Niloh's temple to make prayer  
For my success,—'twas the hour, Tubal-cain,  
When you had left me on your own affair,—  
The high priest saw me there, and drawing me  
Apart behind the altar said: "Young man,  
I love your family well, and this you know;  
But there are others here whose hate to you  
Is deep as is my love. In Niloh's name  
I order you and yours on pilgrimage  
To Himenay's top; and see that you be gone  
Before the midnight ring. If here you stay,  
I say not whether wrath of gods or men,  
But something you must fear."

JARED.

Ah, there it is.

I've watched them creeping into coil; and now  
They'd strike on Niloh's eve. Well, well, we'll go.  
Better the rain a-patter on our heads  
Than daggers in our ribs.

TUBAL. Yes, get to horse!  
To-night we'll ride for life; but red will be  
Our reckoning when the fatal see-saw turns.

JARED. Are we provisioned for a siege like this?

TUBAL. The stores of years are in the temple  
vaults.

IRAD. On, on! for fast and dread are those  
behind!

[*Exeunt.*]

CURTAIN.

SCENE II.

TIME. Somewhat later on the same night.

PLACE. A ferry at the foot of Mount Himenay.

[*Enter Javan, an attendant, and the ferryman.*]

ATTENDANT. Here lies the landing; here the rest must gather.

We'll hunt no more through night and mud; wait here.

FERRYMAN. Then more are coming?

ATTENDANT. We lost them in the dark.  
Have you a boat to ferry us to the mountain?

FERRYMAN. It lies below.

JAVAN. Go you and see it ready.  
I'll wait them here.

[*Exeunt attendant and ferryman.*]

Whom wait I? What are these,  
My cousin's people? Is he one with them,  
A part of that I've seen? From what wild forces  
Arose a world so beauteous and so bad?  
Where, where and what am I, and what the future  
That waits for me and Irad, drifting far  
From safe tradition o'er uncharted seas?  
God of my fathers, reach me down Thy hand,  
That I may clasp it in the night. I fear.



[*Enter an overseer of the farming district and a merchant.*]

Is Irad come? Are ye his followers?

MERCHANT.

Nay.

OVERSEER. Nay, if by Irad you mean lord Irad of the great city, we come even now from discarding his livery. Many a year these estates were his and his mother's before him. They have nourished his pleasures well, though they never saw his face. Now his reign is out; let them serve the pleasures of others.

JAVAN. These, then, are Irad's lands?

MERCHANT. They were, sir, but are no longer. For all these ancestral acres his claim is forfeited. At sunrise they're mine.

OVERSEER. You will find them sadly dilapidated. Nowadays men drive estates, like horses, till they drop. Present gain, present gladness, that's all they think of; and the accounts of the future may be settled by the poor devils who're born then.

MERCHANT. Well, sir, why should not the men of the future pay the bills of the future?

OVERSEER. Because, saving your worship, the world doesn't go that way. Our fathers laid foundation for our prosperity; and if we lay none for our sons, who shall?

MERCHANT. If our fathers worked so hard to make us happy, heaven forbid that we should dis-

appoint them. The toil of their vine-dressing effervesces in our wines; the sweat of their masons floats in cool breezes through our summer villas; the aching eyes of their weavers have made the couch of my mistress downy. Every pleasure which I deny myself means that a day's work of some ancestor was done for nothing.

OVERSEER. Think of these roads they built, these dams and granaries of hewn stone. We use them while they last, and, instead of repairing them, spend our surplus on baths and pavilions. Yonder our fathers ditched morasses into meadows; and now the children gulp down the profits and let the meadow sink back into a morass. They are so busy squandering money in midnight banquets that they cannot stop for mending a rotten sluice to preserve the patrimony of their children.

MERCHANT. 'Tis meadow yet; 'twill last our lifetime. (*Aside to Javan.*) But tap one of these ancient barrels with hoary cobwebs around its chin, and out spurt the praises of "the good old days." (*Aloud.*) You have a wide variety here in your farming.

OVERSEER. We raise everything which the market demands; all kinds of drugs, from lotus and poppy for making your friend happy to hemlock and strychnine for making your enemy sad; wines and sauces in abundance; and all these other new-fangled notions which, after a thousand years of

comfort, men have suddenly discovered to be necessities of life. Also our hillsides rear boys and women, though they grow not on stalks; but that lucrative industry is a special perquisite of others than the landlord.

JAVAN (*aside*). Is this the tillage which replaces the sweet gums and orchards of Eden? (*Aloud.*) What parodies of humanity come here?

[*Enter six laborers.*]

OVERSEER. Yonder men are laborers on the estate.

MERCHANT. What a dog's life is that! Why do these fools persist in living when they're so cadaverous that the light shines through them?

OVERSEER. For the same reason that your fine nobles persist in living when their nerves are so racked with feasting that hell squirms through them.

JAVAN. What work can so deface the body God made?

OVERSEER. No two have the same. The first works in the poppy fields; the second's a mason on the new villa; the third raises herbs for a sauce; the fourth cultivates silkworms for ladies' mantels; and the last two serve the cause of art.

JAVAN. How so?

OVERSEER. One of them quarries out marble for

our finest sculptors, and the other forges metal for the best harps in the city.

JAVAN. Did they ever see statue or hear harp?

OVERSEER. They see nothing but work and hear nothing but threats. How else should I raise my lord's revenue?

JAVAN. And how long do they last before nature takes pity on them?

OVERSEER. Some three years, some five. There are plenty more when these are gone.

MERCHANT. I confess that I am never more happy than in the presence of these wretches; for then, like one whose fortunes are safe while another's are burning, I thrill with the sense of my own blessedness. What says the song of Bahran?

Life that is pink in the sky and the maiden's cheek,

And the peach when it flowers,

Life that has tasted much and has more to seek,

Is ours, is ours.

What the grudging old gods had meant for the many, distills

Its bliss for the few.

The vineyards and fruits that grow on a thousand hills

Are for me and you.

Leave the bird in the net,

And the bud o'er the scythe;

Let the laborer sweat,

And the sufferer writhe;  
To the camel his load,  
To the Sethite his code;  
But the dream of the magic herb, and our myrtle  
    bowers,  
Where we eat of the substance of others, are glad,  
    and forget,  
All that Old Eden possessed, and what Eden ne'er  
    showed,  
Are ours, are ours.

Well, let us go in. There's a fearful storm  
mustered overhead; pray heaven it hurt not my  
crops or buildings!

OVERSEER (*moving away, while a faint gleam of  
light gives his face a momentary likeness to a  
death's-head*). I will report, sir, in the morning,  
that we may take a survey of your new property  
together.

[*Exeunt overseer and merchant.*]

JAVAN. What men are these, whose rustic cots  
    have life  
Wondrous and wicked as the town's itself?

[*He sits down in a small arbor which conceals him  
from the center of the scene.*]

The fatal hours run on, yet wherefore fear?  
Things worse there are than death, that threaten  
    here.

FIRST LABORER. Ugh! I'm tired.

SECOND LABORER. Rain coming.

THIRD LABORER. Let it come.

FOURTH LABORER. Give me a mouthful. I've  
no food.

FIRST LABORER. Not I.

SECOND LABORER. Nor I.

THIRD LABORER. Every man for himself.

FOURTH LABORER. No drink either? I'm faint.

FIRST LABORER. None to spare.

FOURTH LABORER. I've worked day and night.

SECOND LABORER. Who hasn't?

FOURTH LABORER. One drink, as you'd like it  
yourself.

THIRD LABORER. Not I. Will your guzzling  
wet my gullet?

FIFTH LABORER. Wild night up there.

SIXTH LABORER. What's the difference to us?

FIRST LABORER. We work, rain or shine.

SECOND LABORER. Look there. (*Shows broken  
hand.*)

THIRD LABORER. Well, what of it?

SECOND LABORER. That's what we masons have  
to work with.

FIRST LABORER. That's nothing. Look what we  
do.

FIFTH LABORER. Raise lotus and poppies?

FIRST LABORER. Break men's backs to put  
gentlemen dreaming.

FOURTH LABORER. Got any lotus?

FIRST LABORER. Some I stole. No, you don't get it.

THIRD LABORER. And we kill ourselves to make a sauce.

SIXTH LABORER. What for?

THIRD LABORER. To make gentlemen hungry.

FOURTH LABORER. Let them fast.

SECOND LABORER. Not they; they're always feasting.

THIRD LABORER. And the sauce keeps them healthy and hungry.

FIFTH LABORER. Yes, and poor men starve a year to get them one meal of birds' tongues.

THIRD LABORER. That what you do?

FIFTH LABORER. Not now. Working in quarry. See there. (*Shows scars.*)

SIXTH LABORER. Stone for building?

FIFTH LABORER. No, statues.

FOURTH LABORER. One leaf of poppy?

FIRST LABORER. Get out! Can't you earn your own supper?

FOURTH LABORER. I ought to. I work hard enough.

FIRST LABORER. Doing what?

FOURTH LABORER. Weaving silk mantels. I'm going blind at it.

SIXTH LABORER. So am I.

SECOND LABORER. What, working in the forge?

SIXTH LABORER. Yes, the glare burns my eyes.

THIRD LABORER. Ugh, I dreamed I was a lord last night.

FIRST LABORER. The more fool you.

THIRD LABORER. Kept others working while I feasted. 'Twas fine.

FIFTH LABORER. Dreams go by contraries.

THIRD LABORER. Thought I got angry and killed two of them.

SIXTH LABORER. Look out or they'll kill you.

SECOND LABORER. Much he'd care or any of us.

FIRST LABORER. That's right. What good's life to us?

FOURTH LABORER. If I could only go to sleep to-night and know I'd never wake up again, I'd be happy.

SIXTH LABORER. So would I.

THIRD LABORER. Only I wish the rich could die too to make things even.

FIFTH LABORER. No hope of that. Come, we'll crawl off to our kennels.

SIXTH LABORER. And to work again in the morning.

[*Exeunt laborers. Enter Irad, Tubal-cain, Adah and ferryman.*]

FERRYMAN. Be not angry, sir; 'tis a slight delay. We had not dreamed that any would tempt the ferry to-night.



TUBAL. Sit down, man, and be calm. We have driven as if Panic were our jockey. Your lunatic haste will mean nothing but final delay. To brain our guide for misleading us,—that is a hopeful way of making speed.

IRAD. Ah, you know not what Terror pursues me. But indeed I meant not to kill him.

FERRYMAN. Step within, sirs, and be sheltered. The boat will be here in a moment.

*[Exeunt all except Irad and Adah. They seat themselves near the arbor, in which Javan remains unseen.]*

IRAD. Nay, Adah, stay with me; this bench for us.

Love keeps apart and private. Twine our fingers.  
We plunge in darkness; and we'll feel, like children,  
Less frightened hand in hand.

ADAH. How black it grows,  
How wild o'erhead! Strange air for Niloh's night.  
Thy flesh is cold that should be warm with love.  
Is't weariness or fear?

IRAD. Press closer, love;  
Let thy warm bosom beat away my fear.  
What think'st thou, Adah—if our death be nigh,  
Is life beyond the grave?

ADAH. Oh, far beyond  
Our quick, warm youth the grave. Why should we  
vex

Our soul for what's beyond that dim beyond?  
 Here grow the flowers of love to-night, and thus  
 I pluck them while they bloom.

IRAD. May they be green  
 In memory long. But sleepless visions here,  
 Upleaping from the downy present, pace  
 The cold, dark, echoing future.

ADAH. Morbid fancies.  
 Recall that nursery rime the children sing:

The present is a festal bark,  
 In which we float o'er waters dark.  
 While in the present still we dwell  
 The banquet waits and all is well.  
 When from the present forth we leap  
 We drown in ocean strange and deep.

We'll change our theme. My too forgetful lover  
 Did never ask me how the moments fled  
 When he was absent.

IRAD. Let me hear thee tell;  
 'Twill charm my gloom away.

ADAH. Long every hour  
 Unshared with thee, and sad. I never knew  
 How mournful harp and flute, how empty seem  
 The marble hallway and the echoing stair  
 Till then. And waking lonely, I have often  
 Clasped the cold moonlight reaching out for thee,  
 Pressed my warm bosom on the chilly paving,

And buried in the unresponsive night  
The kiss that begged return.

IRAD.   No more thou shalt;  
Forgive me, love. Were all thy kindred kind?  
Were wealth and comfort yours?

ADAH.   Unbounded wealth,  
All ancient Elmin owned; for Elmin's dead,  
And we his heirs.

IRAD.   Old age has claimed him then?

ADAH. It might be age, or else an ointed gown  
My brother gave him when he lived too long.  
I never asked, not I. You shudder, dear;  
Is it the damp night wind?

IRAD.   No, no, go on.

ADAH. But bitter 'twas to watch the love of  
others,  
Happy while I was loveless; when dim night  
Barred out the world's intrusion, to remember  
What was and what might be. Eldanah's palace  
Lay next to ours. He and his gentle lady  
Were glad as once were we.

IRAD.   Did not Eldanah,  
For so I heard, wed his own daughter?

ADAH.   Yes.  
Why not? 'Tis common now. They grew together  
Like bough and bud. Heaven willed it.

IRAD (*aside*).   Did it so?  
And what said Noah then, and Noah's God?

ADAH. True love was that. They prized each other dearly;  
 And when he perished, murdered, none know how,  
 His daughter pined and died, and sleeps with him.

IRAD. Know'st thou what Noah would have told thee, Adah,  
 Had he but heard?

ADAH. I half believe I know.

IRAD. He would have said like breath from charnels blew  
 Through thy dear lips the life that God forbade;  
 And, quoting God, had told what murder means,  
 And incest; what dread ripples roll from them,  
 Which make them crime. He'd ask how you so calmly

Could plaster o'er the stain of blood, and paint  
 The bridal blush on love's unnatural leer.

ADAH. And would his whilom pupil say it too?

IRAD. I might, but words are breath.

ADAH. Hast thou unlearned  
 Thy former life? Hadst thou been Elmin's heir,  
 Poor, one old man between thy hopes and thee,  
 And he the man of men thy soul did hate,  
 Here tedious prose and his triumphant sneer,  
 And there delight and revel and revenge,—  
 Would Elmin live? Couldst thou not hear the call  
 Of life and freedom summoning to enjoy?  
 Already thou hast heard it, at its call  
 Shed Enoch's blood, as others that of Elmin.

[*Javan starts violently.*]

Or had I been thy daughter, dear as now,  
Would'st thou inquire what fountain poured the  
wave

That cooled thy thirst? Oh, you have learned by  
heart

Some parrot words; but look on life itself  
As these beheld it; glad are Elmin's heirs,  
Sweet was Eldanah's love. Wilt thou recant  
The creed of years? Canst thou not feel as I?

IRAD. And if I could, God give me strength to  
keep

That feeling ever dumb!

ADAH.

Again you shudder,

As though with fear.

IRAD.

Know you the fairy tale

We heard as children, how a mermaid dwelt  
With men till she grew human? But one day,  
On the blue edge of ocean, while she heard  
Its far, unearthly music calling, calling,  
The strange old longing of the deep came back,  
And drew her downward, half as mermaid longing  
For that dim fatherland, and half as mortal  
Afraid to drown. And while she felt the waters  
Roll deeper, deeper as they claimed her, then  
She shuddered too.

ADAH.

But yet became a mermaid.

IRAD. No, there the story halted. If I tell it  
To son of mine, how shall I end it, how?

[*Unnoticed by them, Javan steals from the arbor, and moves to the other side of the scene, where he meets an attendant.*]

JAVAN. Are you lord Irad's man?

ATTENDANT. I am.

JAVAN. I pray you,  
If he shall ask you for a friend called Javan,  
Tell him these words of mine: There is a legend  
That Lucifer and Michael love each other,  
But never meet nor can, so clash and jar  
The adverse worlds in which they move; and I  
Love Irad ever, but we meet no more.  
Goodby. I ride for Noah's mountain.

ATTENDANT. Stay,  
My youthful lord. The night is wild; ere dawn  
Streams will be freshets and the bridges lost.  
You risk your life to go.

JAVAN. I dare not stay.  
If fortune aid me I shall live to-morrow.  
But if I die, and future ages know  
Three sons of Noah only, better that  
Than what is here. Forget not thou my message.

[*He moves on and vanishes in the darkness. Enter Tubal-cain and ferryman.*]

TUBAL. The boat is ready. But by my advice  
Here shall we bide. I never viewed a sky  
Like that to westward. Come but here and look.

Earth seems not earth beneath it. Here are herds-  
men,

Who swear the sea is loose, and tidal waves  
Abroad on inland plains. Hark! was that thunder,  
Or earthquake's rumble?

FERRYMAN.    Yonder cloud will burst,  
A liquid avalanche. Mark the sapling crouch,  
The lake blown into white-caps. Rushing mist  
Rides up the peak before us. You are mad  
To journey further.

IRAD.    Those are mad who stay.  
Death gallops fast behind our heels. Away!

*(Exeunt.)*

CURTAIN.

### ACT III.

TIME. The small hours of the morning on the same night.

PLACE. A cave part way up Mount Himenay. It is dark, save for the faint gleam of lightning that comes through the entrance. A fearful uproar, though somewhat muffled, is heard from without. A narrow passage winds back into further recesses of the cave; and from here comes the noise of fighting and dying groans.

*Enter Mizraim from the passage, as if in fear. He hides in a cleft of the rock. Enter a wounded man, who falls with a groan and dies. The noise within grows less, and is wholly lost in the roar of the storm. Then enter from without Irad carrying Adah, Tubal-cain, Jared carried by servants, and several attendants.]*

IRAD. Hello!

OTHERS. Hello!

IRAD. A cave. Turn in and halt.

AN ATTENDANT. This rain is more than human strength can bear.

It weighs us down like pushing hands. My god!  
How good it seems to rest! Will nothing lift  
This blinding bandage of the night?



TUBAL.

A torch.

Be careful there; the wind will blow it out.

IRAD. More torches, quick, beneath this boulder's  
lee.

Hold one above her face; I think she swooned.

Stand over it; the air comes eddying down,

And makes it flare.

AN ATTENDANT.

It blows a hurricane.

ANOTHER ATTENDANT. What awful medley of  
unearthly sounds

Is that keeps rolling from the plain below

Through this blind horror? Oh, for one short  
glimpse

Of what earth looks like now! The very flashes

Are drowned in rain, one solid mass of blackness.

What's that which happens down below? Who  
tells?

IRAD. Here, fold my cloak together for her  
pillow,

And give me yours to wrap her. Bring some wine.

She stirs; her eyes are opening.

ADAH.

Where am I?

IRAD. Safe here with me; we're on Mount Him-  
enay.

ADAH. Is the rain ended?

IRAD.

No, we're in a cave.

JARED. Hark, Irad, Tubal-cain, do you not hear  
Through all the rushing of the storm, and splash  
Of driving water? Hark, what sounds are those?

IRAD. You're happy not to know.

TUBAL (*going to the entrance*). More fast and  
keen

It lightens; now we'll tell what floods are loose.  
There comes a flash would light the ocean bed  
Through solid brine, and shows—

JARED. What, what? (*No answer.*)

Speak, man.

IRAD (*going to entrance*). All black again. I'll  
tell you when it comes.

JARED. There, there! That peal was like a  
crashing world.

You must have seen. (*Pause.*) Speak, Irad, where  
are you?

IRAD. I'm at thy side; and, as for what I've seen,  
Bless Heaven that made thee blind.

JARED. Thy voice is hollow,  
Like breath from Horror's chamber. Where's thy  
hand?

'Tis Irad's hand. Go on.

IRAD. Before I fled  
From Noah's tent, they told me, and confirmed,  
No matter how, that that dread God of theirs,  
Incensed at earth for His neglected shrine,  
Prepared to-night to drown the world. I fled;  
And with such frail excuse as time allowed  
By lies have led you up this mountain peak,  
And saved you so. For know that Noah's God  
Has kept His word. Already fathoms deep,

And deeper every moment, whirl the floods  
O'er Nod and all its people.

JARED. You are mad!  
Speak, friends, where are you all? It cannot be.  
Oh, for one hour of blessed sight to know  
What things and whom to trust!

IRAD. Can you not hear?  
Is that dread sound that slowly gathering grows  
Aught that you ever heard in life before?

TUBAL. 'Tis true, old man. What forces are  
at work  
Let priests inquire; but all the world is sea.

ADAH. Where art thou, Irad? What alarms you  
all?

IRAD. Say nothing yet. (*To Adah.*) Rest,  
dear, we all are safe.  
'Tis a wild night, and tragic things, I fear,  
Have happened elsewhere; but they touch not us.

ADAH. The hour of love has rung. We'll build  
our bower  
In some dim grotto winding far within.  
Hast thou forgot what hallowed night is this,  
Made doubly dear by waiting?

IRAD. Nay, but years  
Remain for that; postpone all pleasure now.  
O Adah, this has been a fearful night;  
And dying groans are floating up the sky  
As thick as rain.

ADAH. But we, we are alive.

IRAD. I'm sick at heart. Nay, Adah, talk no  
more

Of love to-night, but tend me as a nurse,  
That, lapsing back to childhood, I may lose  
All memory of the present.

ADAH. What strange mood  
Is this on Niloh's eve? Yet have your will,  
For, truth, your eyes are lit with fever's gleam.  
Untimely thoughts are there, like stars of night  
In wells at noonday. Rest, I'll be thy nurse.

[*Tubal-cain in examining the cave discovers Mizraim.*]

TUBAL. Who's here?

MIZRAIM. Oh, mercy, grant me mercy, sir!

TUBAL. Come here and show your face. A  
stripling boy.

Why skulk these dainty limbs in such a den  
On night as wild as this?

MIZRAIM. But spare my life.

TUBAL. Perhaps I will when thou canst show me  
cause.

March here between the torches, full in view,  
In our mid circle. Throw thy weapon down.  
And now be prompt and pointed when I ask.  
First then, your name.

MIZRAIM. Mizraim.

TUBAL. Your parents who?

MIZRAIM. None know but Niloh, from whose  
rites I sprung.

TUBAL. A goodly pedigree, yea, common too  
In our abstemious race. How came you here?

MIZRAIM. I marched among the rebel host of  
late.

And when our army broke and scattered wide  
Before Togarmah, here the remnant fled,  
A handful merely. Here the others died  
This very night, and I was left alone.

TUBAL. How died they all?

MIZRAIM. In quarrel o'er the spoil,  
Which rose at feast when heads were hot with wine.  
Perhaps you doubt my word; then come with me  
Down yonder passage. There you'll find them all  
Still palpitating, warm, nay, some in whom  
Yet lingers life.

TUBAL. Go on, I follow thee,  
My knife against thy neck. Deceive me not.

[*Exeunt Tubal-cain and Mizraim.*]

IRAD. Draw back in darkness.

ADAH. Why unsheathe your blade,  
And point your javelin at that line of light?  
The dead are harmless.

IRAD. And the living, liars.  
Behind me, love; I would not for the world  
Have ill betide thee.

ADAH. Thou art brave and strong;

And Tubal-cain is of the giants old.

Why need we fear?

IRAD. I fear not for myself.

God bless thee, Adah. Ne'er till danger's hour  
Knew I how dear I held thee. Here they come.

[*Re-enter Tubal-cain and Mizraim.*]

TUBAL. Well, such is human folly. There they  
lie  
Amid the wealth they died for, piled like logs  
In rotten woodlands, every fool in turn  
A murderer and a victim.

JARED. All are dead?

TUBAL. Some dead, some dying, all past mischief  
now.

IRAD. Methought I heard them groan. 'Twere  
mercy's part  
To ease their dying hours.

TUBAL. Nay, let them lie;  
They're nought to us. Now, sir, come here again.  
I fought with those before Togarmah's fort,  
Your adversary there. What blight came down  
To shrivel up your fine array so fast?  
We looked defeat in the face; and, presto! change!  
Our dread snow-man had melted.

MIZRAIM. Those rich valleys  
Were too indulgent for a soldier's life.  
And drinking deep all joys of nature there,  
We lost our pith and edge; found pleasure soft,

Ambition hard and foolish; passed the word  
 From ear to ear, till our whole host became  
 A martial farce, a flimsy, painted cloth,  
 Which war's first rumor blew to tatters.

TUBAL.

So.

A set of puny boys, whom pleasure melts  
 Like ice in August. We old veterans, too,  
 We had our joys; but we could stand the pace.  
 Yet, half our army being young like you,  
 Had you but charged that night instead of fleeing,  
 You had found us rotten ramparts. Such is life.  
 Well, sit you there. We'll give you orders later.

IRAD. Is this the nation of the giants, Nod,  
 Whose armies, like colliding thunder-clouds,  
 Jarred earth in meeting? Have we fallen to this?

TUBAL. Oh, we have warriors yet can whack a  
 helmet,  
 Old hoary-heads; but these green boys are fog.  
 Just 'sixty years ago that very field  
 Saw such a shocking where our armies clashed  
 As would have stunned them with its noise alone.

[*Enter from without Iban and several revelers.*]

IBAN. If ye be men whom e'er compunction  
 touched,  
 Beauty, or love of art, receive us kindly.  
 I am the poet Iban, these my friends,  
 Shipwrecked but now against this mountain's base,

Half dead from bruising rock and pounding wave,  
And rain that weighs like lead.

IRAD. 'Tis he himself.  
Welcome, old friend, familiar faces here  
You see, and kindred bosoms.

IBAN. Praise the gods!  
What, Irad, Tubal-cain, can this be true?  
The muses guard their own.

TUBAL. Sit down, sit down.  
You're white and pant like deer.

IBAN. Have ye a fire?  
I've ocean dripping from my back; and all  
The clouds of heaven have soaked me.

IRAD. Nought but torches.

MIZRAIM. So please you, sir, within the further  
cave  
Is fuel plenty. Only give the word,  
This crevice was our fireplace.

IRAD. Quickly then.

[*Mizraim brings out fuel from within and starts a fire.*]

IBAN. What boy is that?

IRAD. Last of a bandit gang;  
The rest have killed each other.

IBAN. What's his future?  
Do you adopt him?

IRAD. 'Twas but now we found him.



TUBAL. Nay, no adopting waif and stranger  
 here  
 To load us down. We'll use his wits to-night,  
 To-morrow end him.

JARED. Ay, the simplest way.  
 We've servants all we need.

IRAD. Now God forbid!  
 Is he not human, feeling joy and grief  
 To which our natures echo, kindred man?

TUBAL. Why, yes, he has a heart, a pair of  
 lungs,  
 Like us or wolves or jackals. What of that?  
 He'll profit nought to me; if you enjoy him,  
 Why, keep him then.

JARED. 'Twill be another mouth.  
 Why stint our guests and us for God knows who?

IRAD. Is there no joy in grateful eyes, no pang  
 In dying groans, when dreams identify  
 Our lives with those we mold?

TUBAL. Why should there be?  
 This comes from Noah, sounds like old wives' tales  
 Of amputated stumps and aching limbs.

IBAN. Ay, Noah's folly. Sweeter far is love  
 When focused warm, intense in narrow ring,  
 Than thus diffused.

TUBAL. "Glad homes," the proverb says,  
 "Are lined with love and moated round with blood."

IBAN. Friend, favorite, mistress, these are magic  
 words;

Outside,—what matters? Yet this boy is fair;  
 And beauty is too rare and hardly won  
 For reckless usage. Let us keep him still.

JARED. Ay, now you mention it, his step is light,  
 And soft his voice as woman's. Fair, you say.  
 Would I could see him.

TUBAL. Ah, our reverend friend  
 Begins to feel the spell of Niloh's mount.

JARED. Come hither, lad. (*Mizraim approaches.*)  
 Thou'rt comely, I am told.  
 The only eyes which blindness has are these,  
 That yet would view thy beauty. (*Feels his face.*)

Every line  
 Like chiseled marble; and this healthy warmth  
 Declares the blush of youth. I like thee well.  
 What say'st thou, lad? Wilt thou be friends with  
 me,  
 The solace of my age, as Bahran's boy  
 Was joy to him?

MIZRAIM (*with a quick glance around*). Yea,  
 sir, if so you will.

IRAD. Sir, I implore you, let this matter wait.  
 In hourly danger still, no time have we  
 For aught but vigilance to save our lives.  
 Our safety's first of all.

TUBAL. The lad is right.  
 All things in proper time. Hear reason, man.  
 And you, gay youngster, shall be butler here,  
 For your dead band had cellars. Come with me.

[*During the following dialogue between Irad and Iban, Mizraim and the attendants, under the direction of Tubal-cain, bring in from the further cavern an extemporized banquet table, and load it with all the paraphernalia belonging to a splendid feast.*]

IBAN (*aside to Irad*). A sickening offer, dotage  
wooing fear,  
And profanation of that tender tie  
For which poor Bahran died.

IRAD (*aside to Iban*). The scene fits well  
With that outside. If eyes above look down  
What thoughts must be in heaven.

IBAN. Yea, the gods  
Will smile behind the scenes. Yet, after all,  
So dear the hours of youth and young delight,  
Who'd blame the old, though loth to let them go?

IRAD. How shall I judge a man who callous thus,  
Yea, o'er the deathbed of his fatherland,  
Affronts both God and nature's whispering law?  
And this but sample of a lifetime gone,  
As well I know.

Yet not through blood alone but deeper ties  
He bids me pause in judgment. That gray beard  
Has wagged above my boyhood's play, and drooped  
Tear-drenched o'er beds of fever. Hours I've sat  
Perched on his knee, while we like statesmen  
weighed

The worth of hobby-horses, balls, and drums,  
 Tin catapults and bastions. Then in youth  
 My exploits made him weep with joy; he'd cheer me  
 Did I compete for prize in dance or song,  
 And hang the tiger's pelt with golden claws  
 Because his boy had killed it. Gracious heaven!  
 When thus the flower and stinking weed entwine,  
 Which shall we count the man?

IBAN. You're too severe.  
 View human follies close with candid eye,  
 Not thus through Noah's twisted lens, you'll find  
 The sin that plucks an apple through a fence  
 Is venial, ay, and universal too.  
 The strife 'twixt law and longing sweetens life,  
 And there romance is born.

IRAD. So once thought I.  
 I had begun to reason otherwise.

IBAN. This mystery life is like a lovely girl,  
 Who cries, "You shall not," when she hopes you  
 will,  
 Rewards the bold transgressor well, and chills  
 Sheep-eyed Obedience with her frosty praise.  
 And toward her genial warmth I stretch my hands,  
 As toward this welcome flame.

TUBAL. Now, gentle friends,  
 Our neighbors having piled our board, and then  
 By opportune demise removed themselves,  
 We'll banquet even here.

IRAD. What! here a feast!

IBAN. The gods be praised! ne'er needed like  
to-night.

Here's food to cheer the faint, and kindly wine  
To laugh our horrors down.

TUBAL. Be seated all.

THE REVELERS. On Niloh's mount the god pro-  
vides his own.

TUBAL. One place is vacant.

IBAN. Why does Irad wait?

IRAD. Go on nor notice me; I'm not in mood  
For revelry to-night.

TUBAL. Nay, come, lad, come.  
What sullen devil lurks in you of late?

IBAN. Your empty place will haunt us, like the  
chair

In Bahran's lay. Come, you look dark as men  
Who weigh some tragic matter pro and con.  
The sadder earth, the more we need what cheers.  
Sit down and laugh with us.

IRAD. I'm not in mood.

ADAH. Art thou in mood to please a lady's wish,  
And one to whom thou owest grace as well  
For cold refusal past? Shall I alone  
Have emptiness for partner? Noble sir,  
I do entreat thy company at feast.

IRAD. Hast thou forgot what night it is?

ADAH. Nay, nay,  
'Tis thou forgettest; this is Niloh's night.  
Be earth undone; but let our rosy ring

Be pleasure's magic circle, friendship's, love's;  
 On that enchanted ground no noxious thing  
 Intrude, or painful thought. Two talismans  
 I offer thee, of power to make this den  
 Appear a palace, we the king and queen.  
 The one this cup contains; perchance my lip  
 Might hold the other.

IRAD. How thou gildest o'er  
 What seemed corruption. Which the trulier sees,  
 The eye bewitched by Noah or by thee?

ADAH. Which one, indeed? Be thou impartial  
 judge.

And if thou deem'st my magic more than his,  
 Be pleased to come with me.

IRAD. Ah, well, I yield.  
 Thy witchery's more, be wisdom where it will.

IBAN. A toast, a toast! the victor comes and  
 brings  
 Her captive train behind.

ALL. A toast, a toast!

IBAN. Pour, servant, pour. The night may rave  
 without;  
 What care we now how leap and howl beneath  
 The baffled hounds of ocean?

REVELERS. Doubly sweet  
 Is safety after danger.

IBAN. Ay, it is.  
 This warms the blood. I shudder when I think,  
 Had I remained below, what cold blue hand

Had drawn my morning curtains, and what face  
Peered in on mine.

IRAD.                                 Who brought you safely here?

IBAN. A power that willed not Cain should cease  
to be.

The lure of ocean drew us. Three whole days  
We sailed the main, while like a sounding shell  
Our vessel rang with music. Then arose  
This awful storm that hurled the sea on land,  
And us therewith, swept o'er the drowned domain,  
The billows' plaything. Last on rocks below,  
Once inland cliff but now the ocean's edge,  
We dashed and shattered. Yet such grace was ours  
From god in love with art, or pitying muse,  
Entire our band were saved, though all the rest,  
Page, woman, slave, and brawny seaman, drowned.

IRAD. Not one of all your number gone?

IBAN.   Not one,

Though ne'er alive through such a boiling foam,  
Methinks, came man before.

IRAD.                                 A priest would deem  
Some special providence of gods indeed  
Had held you worthy saving.

IBAN.   Yea, for we,  
Though humble lamps, preserved the ancient flame  
That ocean else had quenched.

IRAD.   I drink to thee,  
Whom powers inscrutable have chosen thus  
Ambassador from former worlds to new.

Drink deep; I'll drink with thee, till in the cup  
We find thy message for the men unborn.

FIRST REVELER. Peace, peace, ye yelping clouds.

Have we no harp  
Of power to drown their discord?

SECOND REVELER. Sheathe your fires,  
Ye hunters of the night; the game is flown.

THIRD REVELER. Let ocean bellow, while the  
mountain laughs,  
And makes its rage a foot-bath.

IRAD (*aside*). Yet one sound  
Ye cannot hush nor mock, the kindred cry,  
Now shrill as if beneath the murderer's blow,  
Now myriad-voiced in ocean. Fill the bowl.  
These others drink and hear it not. Drink thou.  
For ne'er till abstinence unbraced thine ear  
Heard'st thou or heeded.

ADAH. Fearful must have been  
The scenes you witnessed, Iban, sailing thus  
O'er what was happening yonder.

IBAN. Fearful, strange.  
I know not whether theme of future verse,  
Or memory dread to paralyze all song  
In me forever. Dim and foggy broke  
That fatal morning. Sultry heaven sucked  
The moisture of the deep in rolling mist,  
That steamed aloft unceasing, wall on wall,  
To one gray roof. There all day long we rowed  
Through cloudy corridors, down whispering aisles,



Whose waters murmured low, like multitudes  
 When hushed in some great awe. But close on  
 night

Wind, mild at first but freshening keen and fast,  
 And shouldering Titan-like the clouds along,  
 Went blowing inland. Dark the world became;  
 And sounds mysterious under ocean ran,  
 Like noise of crunching rocks or settling walls  
 When props are knocked away. Then heaving  
 deep,

As if its bed were tilted up, while sank  
 The land in equal scale, whate'er the cause,  
 The mighty stream rolled inland. Earth beneath  
 Convulsive groaning heaved the liquid hills,  
 That far subsiding rolled. O'erhead was storm,  
 Black cloud and lightning flash, a roof of night,  
 Whose rafters all were fire; while yet the rain  
 Hung pendulous, nor fell. Now on our lee  
 Loomed up the halls of Cain, like rocks awash,  
 Beneath that awful gleam. The crawling brine  
 Had filled their streets; and waves like battering-  
 rams

Demolished home and fane. On beetling roofs,  
 Yet stedfast, jutting dark against the fire,  
 Moved frantic forms, whose cry methought I heard  
 Through stormy miles between. Then fell the rain  
 In tumbling rivers, making earth and sky  
 One formless blot.

ADAH.

Ah, may my sleep to-night

Be free of dreams; for if a vision came  
What pictures might it draw.

IBAN.    These eyes could weep  
A second flood for what the first destroyed.  
I saw the marble domes a thousand years  
Had built with toil of thousands, hewing flat  
Whole mountains for the stone, I saw them racked  
From their foundations; arch and aqueduct,  
The marvels of all time, in frothy foam  
Made scaffolding for coral. Park and lawn,  
The walks we loved, far rides along the hills,  
Wide stretch of landscape flecked with countless  
                 homes,—  
All now are nothing.

IRAD.    Just beyond the town  
A villa lay where I was born and reared.  
I knew its every acre, every curve  
Of slope or river; 'twas my world, 'twas home.  
Such ties the Deluge broke.

A REVELER.                                    Fill high the bowl,  
Else Goodman Gloom may tweak our nose. Drink  
                 deep;  
Old Lady Care would edge into our midst;  
We'll send her packing.

IBAN.    Ay, you're right, you're right.  
Enjoy the fire that burns; the fire that's cold  
Will ne'er inspire the young nor warm the old.

TUBAL. The night is done. Let now the cup of  
                 sleep,

Infused with drowsy lotus, walk its round.  
 A health to dreamland, friends.

ALL.                                    A health to dreamland.

ADAH. On shores afar the peaceful waters lap.  
 And winds at play among the rustling boughs  
 Are calling for their playmates.

IRAD.                                    Wait, we come.

Thy hair is soft, beloved, and thy breath  
 Like April meadows. Fair is earth indeed.  
 Great mother Life, why should thy children lack?  
 Sweet hall of dreams, receive the wanderer back.

[*They all fall into drowsy attitudes, and nothing  
 is heard but the uproar of the storm outside.  
 A long time elapses. Then Irad awakes while  
 the others remain asleep, and with the gleam  
 of unnatural excitement still in his eyes goes  
 to the mouth of the cave.*]

IRAD. Art thou there, Enoch, wandering in the  
 night?

Let him who wishes life be wise, nor tempt  
 The sons of Cain. Thou pay'st thy folly's fee.  
 And thou dark speck beneath the lightning's gleam,  
 If thou be what I think thee, journey on  
 To thy dull destiny. Not Seth alone,  
 Cain also shall survive, and I with Cain;  
 And life with us, not flaccid life and lean,  
 But such as through the inmost vein of being  
 Mines out the treasure hid. Still vex't pursue

A phantom future, lay foundation walls;  
We'll clasp the present, feast in halls that are.

CURTAIN.

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.

TIME. A number of days later.

PLACE. A small temple to Niloh on the topmost point of Mount Himenay. The scene is a square colonnade. At the back it is open and gives a view of the storm outside and the waste of waters, which now are not far below the top of the mountain. Far off appears a half submerged rock which was once the summit of a high mountain peak. In the foreground are rugs, couches, and all the furnishings of luxury. The scene begins in the dim gray twilight of daytime, which darkens into pitch-black night at the end.

*[Enter the Antediluvians as if from banquet.]*

IBAN. Let heaven roar and rain! Who cares?

Its flashes

Are festal lamps to us, its thunder music.

Let the wet patter; let the wind it drenches

Blow cool our fevered cheek.

TUBAL.

Climb, ocean, climb.

Your waves besiege a fort provisioned well.

One drop of life-infusing wine can conquer

All your damp horrors.

IBAN. Ocean's but a stage,  
 Postprandial theater, our panorama.  
 Ring up the scudding mist with thunder, gods;  
 And we'll enjoy the tableau.

TUBAL. Reverend Noah,  
 Afloat there in the storm, eats moldy cheese,  
 Drinks the flat, tepid rain, and lies in straw  
 Where cattle house. Who'd share his cruise with  
 him—  
 Who that can live with us on dainty fare,  
 Drink foaming vintage, lie on purple couches,  
 Feel like the gods warm blood and breathing fra-  
 grance?

IBAN. Ay, let the world go under! What care  
 we  
 In joy's asylum?

ADAH. Only all these garlands  
 Are withered ones; I miss the living wreaths.  
 The rich old earth is bankrupt now of blossom.  
 And I so prized them all, the rose and lily,  
 Proud garden queen and mistress of the meadow.  
 When buds the earth again? When shall we cull  
 Flowers on the hills?

IRAD. Ask Him who sent the Deluge.  
 If still He rule the deep, He knows. But often  
 A crushing terror grips my heart that He,  
 Stunned by this endless rush and roar, and deafened  
 By the eternal lashing of the storm,

Has dropped the reins of power; and the wild  
waters,

Like horses masterless, gallop on forever.

ADAH. A fairer dream was mine. Methought  
the sun

Beamed as of old; and earth to meet him slipped  
Her robe of waters from her like a bride.

His lip was warm on peak and hill, that swelled  
Like breasts of love, and warm his arms of light  
Around the blushing planet. From their union  
Grew life anew. Beneath the mantling sea-weed,  
Like arbutus through withered leaves of March,  
Peeped all the flowers of spring. The parting  
ripple

Went lingering from the moistened hills, that  
gleamed

Like meadows after rain.

IRAD.

I am a churl

To shatter dream so fair; but we must arm  
Our hearts beforehand for the hard, stern truth.  
For when the Flood goes down, if e'er it do,  
The earth will be no bride but one great corpse;  
And that grim desolation, huge and haunting,  
Will hang persistent on the eye, and crush  
The soul within us,—valleys black with slime,  
Gaunt, ribbèd hills, the skeleton of a world,  
And drifted silt, through which the wrecks dis-  
mantled

Of the great past will point like dead men's fingers.

There too we'll find the death of ocean piled  
 High on dry land, strange corpses of the abyss,  
 Tremendous, whale and kraken where they died;  
 Who knows? perhaps leviathan himself  
 Stretched in portentous bulk along some hill,  
 Athwart the sunset like an ominous cloud.  
 And we must live, one lonely colony,  
 In alien scenes of death, till gradual time  
 Enshroud them deep in herbage. I am cruel,  
 But 'tis the surgeon's hand.

TUBAL. This comes of fasting,  
 Fasting and lack of wine, this gloomy mood.  
 You have not drunk to-day. Here, boy, but taste.  
 Here's alchemy transmuting woe to bliss,  
 And fool to sage.

IRAD. We all have drunk too deep  
 Of that charmed cup; would I might never taste it  
 In life again.

IBAN. Oh, 'tis the magic glass  
 Through which all time grows rosy, life's quin-  
 tessence,  
 Romance and beauty. Could you live without it  
 One fleeting moon, to drink from jet and puddle  
 Insidid, bare existence?

TUBAL. He has tried it,  
 With solemn oath abjured the god of wine  
 For three whole days, and on the fourth returned  
 With thrice threefold devotion.

IRAD. What we could do



I know not well; but what we must I know.  
 Have you e'er thought what hardship we must bear  
 When all these vaults are drained? Left empty-  
           handed

On the denuded hills, we must strip off  
 The soft traditions of a hundred years,  
 And delve like Eve and Adam.

ADAH.

Nay, but surely

We'll be the lords of earth.

IRAD.

And who our servants?

Alas, dear head, will miles of barren mud  
 Yield thee one dainty mouthful? Will the winds  
 O'er continents all empty blow together  
 A home for thee? When time has worn away  
 This gorgeous robe, think you its like will grow  
 On wayside brambles? Iban and myself  
 Must till old earth for bread; and thou, sweet love,  
 Even if we spare thee toil, must yet endure  
 With us privation.

IBAN.

Ah, you're like the plague!

Your mood's infectious; and my sickening fancy  
 Already weaves the picture, sordid want  
 With horror mixed, where hunger drives us on  
 Through that great cemetery once a world.  
 Here march we swart and haggard; tired at night  
 Lop trees for shelter, bed on clammy moss;  
 Drive down our pick on buried thrones of kings,  
 Cheap now as limestone; gnaw our blackened crust  
 O'er stones that jut from halls of former feast;

Turn with irreverent blow the bygone bones  
 That once had slept with us; and when the thought  
 Of death and what's beyond has chilled our blood,  
 Read on some kinsman's enigmatic skull,  
 "I know, but tell not." Never! drink and revel  
 While revel lasts; and after that we'll sleep.

IRAD. So say you now; but would you quench so  
 lightly  
 That lamp of thought that none can reilluminate,  
 Dreams even to drudges known, and whispering  
 hope  
 Intangible and sweet o'er weary pillows,—  
 Leave this, and sleep forever, none know how,  
 With nothingness or nightmares? What had Adam  
 And our first mother more than we to charm them?  
 We'll dig as they did, and perhaps like them  
 Be root of some great nation.

TUBAL. Ah, I see you  
 In vision, youngster, practice what you preach.  
 Old Adam—pshaw! his was a bovine race,  
 That grazed, and suckled young, and lived for  
 others.

We're tigers, boy. On others for ourselves  
 We've learned to live, grown sleek and terrible  
 By that warm diet. Can we now, so late,  
 Unlearn the lesson of the centuries? No.  
 We'll live the tiger's life, and die his death  
 When our fat oxen fail.

IRAD. The very tiger

Would chew the grass and live, if his grim maw  
 Could make it food.

TUBAL.                      Ay, but it cannot feed him;  
 Nor can we live and drudge. The pastoral age  
 Went long ago. Oh, I am old, I saw it.  
 They knew no better; ignorance like dew  
 Made life a morning fresh. The dew is dried.  
 They built the world and we enjoyed it well.  
 Why should we build like fools for others? No!  
 When the long banquet's done, out lights! to bed!  
 We've had our hour and used it.

IBAN.                              Ay, our fathers  
 Went drudging on, and lived because they lived,  
 Ne'er asking why. We've learned to think, to know  
 What a poor piebald robe of curse and blessing  
 Is life at best; at worst a poison tunic,  
 Which wisdom spurns.

IRAD.                              Had God not sent the Deluge  
 What hand had built for future years, and saved  
 Wisdom and health for them, while we were wasting  
 The hoard our fathers piled? Those mighty  
     muscles,  
 That have withstood unwrecked a lifetime's waste,  
 Debauchery and soft joy; these brains of ours,  
 In which the genius of a maddening world  
 Flares up before it dies,—these are the savings  
 Of the long, healthy years before we came.  
 What body, mind, and soul were we bequeathing  
 To future nations?

IBAN.                                Would you have the world  
 Forever in the same prosaic furrow  
 Crawl on in stingy leanness? Rather think  
 Our fathers were the root, and we the flower,  
 The perfect blossom. 'Twas for us they sucked  
 The juice of earth; and, had we never bloomed,  
 They too were vain. The dream of what we are  
 Cheered on those plodding sires; and what we were  
 From monolith and parchment shall inspire  
 The years to be. We are a flame that o'er  
 The sordid hills of time interprets life  
 As something splendid.

FIRST REVELER.                    Is not that the theme  
 Of your new drama?

IBAN.                                Surely.

ADAH.                                Oh, the drama!  
 We have not heard it; you must read it, Iban.

SECOND REVELER. No, no! we'll act it.

FIRST REVELER.                    Act it; that is better.

ADAH. What is the plot?

IBAN.                                The Power that rules the world,  
 Arraigned in court for drowning man, is brought  
 Before old Time as judge. The Spirit of Beauty  
 Is his accuser; he defends himself.  
 The verdict ends the play. 'Tis a mere fragment,  
 Thrown off at random.

FIRST REVELER.                    Iban shall be accuser,  
 Old Tubal-cain, throned here in state, be Time,  
 And I the offending Power. We know our lines.

Now for the play.

IBAN.                   The scene's the hall of Time.

TUBAL-CAIN (*as Time*).

We fill our throne of judgment. Who appear  
In this great court of last appeal, to hear  
The sentence of old Time?

IBAN (*as the Spirit of Beauty*).

                                  So deep a wrong  
As never sons of Beauty yet nor Song  
Have known I bring. That Power which from the  
                  void  
The world created and the world destroyed  
I here accuse, that his own child he slew,  
The earth which at his knee in beauty grew;  
And heaped the scum of waves and drifted silt  
O'er what my hand and thine, old Time, had built.

TUBAL-CAIN (*as Time*).

A fearful charge; what answer, Lord of Spheres,  
Mak'st thou before the dread and searching years?

FIRST REVELER (*as the Power of the World, and  
                  mimicking the manner of Noah*).

All measures in vain  
      Would the measureless span;  
And what word shall explain  
      The eternal to man,

In what dim recesses  
 The mystery lurks  
 That curses and blesses  
 And endlessly works?  
 When the world that was doomed  
 Was engulfed in the wave,  
 Then my wrath but resumed  
 What my clemency gave.  
 And the reasons that stirred me,  
 The will that inflamed,  
 Know those only who heard me,  
 When nature was framed.  
 O'er a glory immoral,  
 A beauty profane,  
 Now branches the coral  
 And darkens the main.

TUBAL-CAIN (*as Time*).

Hast thou no more? Speak on, accuser.

IBAN (*as the Spirit of Beauty*).

Lo,  
 The saddest witness court did ever know  
 I bring thee here, and call to life again  
 The spirit of that city built by Cain.  
 Sea-weed and wreckage line her marble floors;  
 Night keeps the temple now where none adores;  
 For thrones imperial whale and serpent vie;  
 And dead within her arms her children lie.

There infants are who scarce began to bloom,  
And babes unborn that died within the womb,  
The little hand that just had learned to reach  
The mother's face, the gaze that longed for speech.  
What law of God or nature ever broke  
The helpless arm, the lip that never spoke?  
There lie, cut off untimely, girl and boy,  
Whose only fault was that they dared enjoy  
What Heaven and nature gave. And here the seas  
Rolled dark o'er those who drew from breathing  
keys

Delight unknown before, from wire or pipe,  
Or metal's clang; and those, when time was ripe,  
Who mirrored life on canvas, wall and frieze;  
And bards divine, who sang of art and ease,  
Delight and dream and life without alloy;  
And learnèd men, who found the cup of joy  
In the dark mine of life, and gave the power  
To taste without repentance' answering hour.  
And mighty men of old renown are there,  
Whose like come nevermore, whose strength could  
tear

The lion's jaws. Unworn a lifetime long  
They drank the exhaustless rapture of the strong,  
Warred, loved, and reveled; and their torch burnt  
red,  
Yet unconsumed. Lo, judge, for all these dead  
I make appeal. The light is quenched that none  
Can reilluminate, the day of glory done,

The life that was, the life that none restore,  
The life that earth shall equal nevermore.

TUBAL-CAIN (*as Time*).

Hark to the judgment of old Time. Thou Power  
That hast consumed thy children, from this hour  
Resign thy throne, nor hope to fill it more  
Till thou the glory thou hast quenched restore.  
And, final act of thy now forfeit might,  
Quell thou the storm, rekindle heaven's light,  
Roll back the waves, and call the earth to bloom.

FIRST REVELER (*as Power of the World*).

Lo, here submissive I accept my doom.  
Even as I speak rain, wind, and cloud have ceased;  
The floods withdraw, the morning walks the east.  
And what thou hast not asked, repentant now  
I will perform, and seal it with a vow.  
The sad survivors of the world that's gone  
I'll love and cherish as the doe its fawn.  
Still as his father did the son shall do;  
And the old world be born in them anew.

IBAN. So ends the play.

ADAH. And well deserves our thanks.

Irak, is that not so? Why do you stare  
So fixedly at the storm? No word of praise  
For what has charmed us?



IRAD. Oh, 'twas doubtless well.  
Only the Power outside there in the rain  
Seemed somewhat different from your mimic one.

[*He walks to the edge of the colonnade and holds up his hands into the storm that drives over him. At the same time there comes an unusually loud peal of thunder.*]

Here's His cold message; there you hear His voice  
Proclaim His will to man. Shall you and I,  
Think you, by his decree renew on earth  
The life we used to live? And that dark water,  
Pitted and wrinkled by the spouting floods  
Of yet augmenting anger, is the seal  
Of His approval on our past and future.

ADAH. You are unwell.

IRAD. Oh, yes, I am unwell,  
Sick of a thing they call the curse of God.  
You too are sick and know it not, all, all.  
But the physician's coming.

ADAH (*to others*). Pray you, leave us.

[*Exeunt all except Adah and Irad.*]

ADAH. Thou art alone with me. Come, rest thy  
head  
Upon my bosom, let me lull thy fever.  
Thy forehead burns.

IRAD. Then fold thy kerchief there.

Not sick in blood am I but sick of heart,  
And need no medicine but companionship.

ADAH. Liked you not Iban's play?

IRAD. 'Twas mockery, mockery.  
He played a wedding march; and through the win-  
dow

I saw the bride's white skull.

ADAH. You will go mad  
If thus you watch that water. Gone is Nod,  
The beautiful city of our childhood's gone;  
But we, we live; and in the city of love  
We'll still be happy.

IRAD. Oh, but shall we be?  
Or is our love a transitory thing,  
Far from life's root, one petal of that flower  
Which God mowed down in mercy ere it withered?  
On thy soft forehead burns no brand of Cain,  
No saint's more fair. Had we grown old in Nod,  
And God ne'er sent the Deluge, could we two  
Have kept the genial torch of love alight  
When blood and bone were cold? What think you,  
Adah?

Weak, old, and wrinkled, had we still been dear  
Each to the other?

ADAH. What persistent wind  
Thus blows your mind on rocks of wretchedness?  
We're young; if now we dream of being old,  
When shall we have our youth?

IRAD. Is love a lamp

To burn on sense and fade when sense is gone?  
If so, we'll light it and inhale its breath  
Now while we may. But there's another love,  
Ne'er found in life yet seeming meant to live,  
That comes in dreams and haunts my waking hours.  
In that the passing glow of youth became  
A furnace fire, wherein the soul was forged  
To beauty's image; and the heat grew cold,  
But left the soul it forged still beautiful.  
And oft I've dreamed one woman dwelt with me  
In a small cottage out among the trees  
As brother might with sister, only closer,  
In sweeter union, weaving soul in soul;  
Have sat long nights beside her hand in hand,  
In lonely chambers, where no stifling air  
With incense loaded came, but meadows breathed  
Through open windows. For our torch the moon  
Shone pure and tranquil. In that hour we might  
Have grown unbodied spirits, mixing still  
In incorporeal winds, and still have loved.  
Our drink was all the brook; and calm within  
Flowed strength that never from the wine-cup  
welled.  
We toiled, accomplished, builded, felt in little  
What must have been the great Creator's joy.  
And the grave hills looked down, and placid heaven  
Smiled kindly at us. Slowly we grew old  
Among our children, yet the moving years  
But drew us closer. Is all this a dream?

Or can we live so, Adah, you and I?

ADAH. Nay, you are feverish; let the future go;  
For none can tell what power or wish were ours  
On ways untried, and woman least of all.  
Where thou art not is desert; where thou art  
I clasp thy youth, and none can wrest it from me.  
Let the great clock tick on; we'll stuff our ears  
And never hear it.

IRAD. But the cry of children,  
Our own, will come. What life shall they be  
taught?

ADAH. What else than that of time's old race,  
the blood  
Of Cain and Irad?

IRAD. Shall our little daughter  
Grow up to worship Niloh? And our boy  
Learn life as I did?

ADAH. Would you have him other  
Than what you are, the manliest son of Cain?  
What in your nature vexes you?

IRAD. O Adah,  
There's something in my nature killing me.  
Why turned my fancy thus to rural life,  
Untainted love and labor's healthy vigil?  
'Twas as the traveler, dying parched in deserts,  
Might dream cool water near, and gulp the sand  
In helpless longing. Night and day there comes  
The vision of a life I cannot live,  
Such as God meant for man, and which my fathers

Bartered for this ere I was born. I said,  
 Calm peace shall drive out anger; in an hour  
 I was a murderer. Temperance, then I said,  
 Shall spread my table; four short days had passed,  
 And wine and lotus claimed me. Yet, I cried,  
 My love for woman shall be pure as dew.  
 But oh! though pure and fair my love for thee,  
 And rooted deep in all that's noblest here,  
 Yet ever on that rose of beauty crawls  
 The loathsome worm that Niloh's worship spawned.  
 Nor can I pluck it from my brain.

ADAH.

Be calm.

You see the world through black delirium's glass,  
 Which colors all you do. Who'd have a man  
 Meek as a peasant, dieting like children,  
 Loving he knows not what? The thing that frights  
 you  
 Is life as all do live. You're not yourself.  
 Rest and forget.

IRAD.

Oh, these are on the surface,  
 Mere ripples from within. But deeper, deeper  
 Goes the dread thing I have not words to tell.  
 'Tis my whole view of life. Ambition, friendship,  
 Love, pleasure, worship, God, and hope, and beauty,  
 And good and evil,—all these things on me,  
 Like some fair hillside glassed in turbid waters,  
 Come fouled and darkened. I am like a man  
 Whose limbs the surgeon lopped but yesterday.  
 Still in his brain the restless nerves reach out

To clasp, to move, and nothing there responds.  
 So day and night my spirit reaches out  
 To be the man God meant me; but the power  
 To clasp that dream my fathers rent and severed  
 Ere I drew breath.

ADAH.                               What would you do or be  
 That you cannot? Are you not envied heir  
 Of what the centuries gathered, fair and strong,  
 A lord of men?

IRAD.                               Oh, yes, a blessed heir.  
 Our grandsires made the torch, our fathers burnt  
   it;  
 'Tis at the socket now.

ADAH.                               Have you not friends  
 To make you cheer?

IRAD.                               Yes, but that angry ocean  
 Brings such a loneliness as none dispel.  
 There speaks the wrath of God, and night and day  
 Frowns in on me.

ADAH.                               Let the dark despot frown.  
 We'll scorn His tyranny.

IRAD.                               Were He a tyrant  
 Then I could bear, retorting scorn with scorn.  
 But wiser, deeper, tenderer than the love  
 Of man is His; and while He frowns on me,  
 He smiles on others, beautiful beyond words.  
 Oh, lonely, lonely past all speech to feel  
 The anger of the good! I am the blot

On His fair world, the gnarl upon the bough,  
Which He must pare away.

ADAH.                                    This road is madness.  
You must not, shall not brood on things like these.  
Hark, and I'll sing thy restless heart to sleep  
With an old tune we love.

## SONG

What calls from the distance  
And beckons us on?  
'Tis the joy of existence  
Ere morning be gone.  
The blossoms are swelling,  
The dawn's in the east;  
And the soul in its dwelling  
Rejoices at feast.  
While to harmony moving  
All blessings unite,  
The loved and the loving  
Drink deep of delight.  
The gods have grown heedless,  
They all are so old.  
Oh, why, when 'tis needless,  
Should pleasure be cold?

IRAD.                                    I thank thee, dear.  
And now thou'rt weary; leave me here a little.  
I'd be alone and silent.

ADAH. Dare I trust thee  
To thy dark thoughts alone?

IRAD. They're fleeing fast,  
Chased by thy gentle touch. Goodby, sweet love.

ADAH. But stay not long alone, for I shall miss  
thee.

[*Exit Adah.*]

IRAD (*alone*). The night grows dense within and  
wild without.

The torches are burnt low, and in their sockets  
Flicker and fade. There, the wild gust has  
quenched them.

Come, Darkness, and shake hands; for I and thou  
Are of the shadowy things that must make room  
When God brings in His morning.

[*Walks to the edge and looks at the water.*]

Rising still.

Where on these waters dark is Noah now?  
Two empty places in his ark there are,  
Mine and my victim's. What dark spot is that  
Which floats against the rock and hangs there?

Strange,

It looks a floating coffin. Something white  
Peeps out beneath the lightning. 'Tis a skull.  
Thou dreadful herald from the realms untrod,  
Why knock'st thou here? Nay, rather, wandering  
waif,



What hospitality dost thou need more?  
Does lack of burial haunt thee? Has that brought  
thee

Thus battering at my gate? Wait, then, I come.

*[He descends to the water, and soon returns with  
a human skull in his hand.]*

Sit there, ambassador. I'd talk with thee.  
I'll seek thy country shortly, and I'd know  
Its customs, folk, and language. You live longer  
Than we do here; pray, does the time hang heavy?  
Do the dead know each other? Can young lovers  
Still find each other lovely? Does God come there  
To smile on these and frown at those? No answer?  
Oh, you're a diplomat; you've learned out there  
To hold your tongue. Nay, you're but bones and  
offal.

What answer should the brain in my warm skull  
Expect of this dry pod? Thou'rt but the husk  
Of some abortive grain which winds have blown  
From God's great threshing-floor. Poor, kindred  
thing,

Cast on the dump-heap of the world, while God  
Finds pleasure elsewhere! Yet he did not die  
Beneath the Deluge; see, these bones were cracked  
By club or staff. What Cainite son of Cain  
Took thee for Abel? Half methinks I know  
The face that once you lined. Did Noah send thee  
Afloat to me? Or has the Flood scooped up

Thy new-dug grave, that thou art come to stare  
 At my sick conscience thus? Preach on, preach on!  
 I know thy text, admit its truth; and yet  
 Thou might'st have mercy. Even in death persist-  
 ent!

Or hast thou come to tell me that those eyes  
 Have seen the Deluge, as thou swor'st they should,  
 And I did swear they should not? Get thee gone!  
 Wert thou alive again I'd kill thee still!

*[He strikes the skull, which rolls along the floor.  
 Then after a pause he speaks.]*

And yet the will to murder!

*[From the next room comes an outburst of drunken  
 revelry.]*

Oh, great Heaven,  
 What things are we that we have lived so long?  
 Come, Death, beneath thy mantel cover up  
 The horrid glass that shows us what we are.  
 Blow wind, and tumble rain, and ocean swell!  
 Why are you tardy? Haste your cleansing work.  
 Wipe us from that creation which we blot!  
 Come, bury us, bury us from the face of God  
 Under your waters forever and forever!

CURTAIN.

## SCENE II.

TIME. Four or five days later.

PLACE. The same as in the last scene. The storm, however, has ceased, and the moon shines occasionally through the clouds.

[*Enter Iban and Tubal-cain.*]

IBAN. The rain has paused; is ocean rising yet?

TUBAL. No, not two fathom down beneath our feet

The waves have halted. Through the grated cloud  
There glints the moon at last.

IBAN. And hope with her  
Returns at length to tell a kindlier future  
Than this cold, fishy death we feared.

TUBAL. Even so.  
The balance turns. Life may have something yet  
For all of us.

IBAN. No, not for all; for one  
That cup is emptied.

TUBAL. Adah?

IBAN. She is dying.

TUBAL. But three days ill, and all to end  
to-night.

The race of men grow frail, young generations  
That wither in the bud. The hoary fathers

Who drowned of late o'ertopped their dwindling  
sons.

The mighty lived; but might was born no more,  
Nor length of days. Could wind as light as this  
Detach a fruit unripened?

IBAN. Fate is jealous  
Of all that's fair. The things that charmed our life  
He filches one by one.

[*Exeunt Iban and Tubal-cain. Enter Irad bearing Adah.*]

IRAD. Here rest thee where the moon's rekindling beam  
May light thy brow.

ADAH. 'Tis gone.

IRAD. 'Twill come again.  
There exiled life returns to all mankind;  
Canst thou not share it?

ADAH. Oh, the wish to live  
Burns up anew, but not the power. All's done,  
The glamour and the glory, warmth and beat  
Of life's glad, transient dream. I pant for breath.  
Ah, me!

IRAD. Here rest thy head. Thou'rt better now?  
There gleams the moon again, as when it lighted  
Our loves of old.

ADAH. But not the same; its ray  
Is cold, that once was warm.

IRAD.                                   The same bright key  
Is this which once unlocked our golden hours.

ADAH.   The golden hours are gone. Ah, who  
          can tell

Behind the door that key unlocks to-night  
What waits for me? Perhaps old Elmin's ghost  
Will ask me on the threshold of the dead  
Why he was poisoned; with malignant leer  
May tell my soul 'tis at his mercy there.

IRAD.   You did not kill him.

ADAH.                               No, nor would have done.  
But yet he'll know I smiled and let him die,  
And shared his wealth.

IRAD.                               What justice can he claim,  
Himself more criminal than thou?

ADAH.   But he,  
He may be mighty yonder. Were he weak,  
Then I'd not fear. Fold me in thy strong arms;  
A horror chills me.

IRAD.                               Fear not, I am near.  
And where thou goest I will follow too.

ADAH.   Ah, but once parted in the boundless  
          night  
How shall we meet again?

IRAD.                               We'll trust to Heaven.

ADAH.   A specter haunts me, a dread, nameless  
          Nothing.

I call the dead to ask them how they fare,  
And Nothing answers. I would read the future

With shuddering heart; and through the parted  
curtain

I see that Nothing waiting.

IRAD.

These are nightmares.

For even though death were one eternal sleep,  
We've slept long hours in life and held them  
precious.

ADAH. We slept to wake again, found slumber  
here

One narrow rift between the blooming days.  
What sleep is that whence none awaken? Surely  
'Tis like no thing on earth. Oh, I am faint.

IRAD. Canst thou yet hear me? Speak, or move  
thy hand.

ADAH. I dig my fingers in the shore of life,  
But the great current draws me.

IRAD.

Ho there, help!

[Enter *Tubal-cain.*]

Her hand grows chilly.

TUBAL.

Say your last adieu.

'Tis come, and none can stay it.

IRAD.

Hast thou more,

Message or last petition?

ADAH.

I have loved thee.

Forget me not if thou dost call my name,  
And Nothing answer. Could we relive our lives  
Unchanged, the same, how sweet it were. Goodby.

(*Dies.*)

IRAD. What, is it ended?

TUBAL. Let us veil her face.

IRAD. No, wait a while. The moon holds down  
its torch

To learn if this be death. The muscles move.  
She'd speak again.

TUBAL. 'Tis the deceiving light.  
There, clouds encase the moon; and in the dark  
You cannot hear her breathe.

IRAD. All silent, yes.

TUBAL. May none disturb her tomb.

IRAD. One night in sport  
She donned my armored glove, which tight I  
gripped,

And swore to hold her thus against a world.

But playful, slipping back the hand within,

She fled and mocked me. What I held was cold,

Empty and hollow. So these earthy fingers

I hold as in a vice; but that within,

Beyond my reach, has slipped from me and gone.

TUBAL. Last daughter of an ancient line was  
she.

And in her childless bed the race of Cain

Forever ends. Ah, well, 'tis better so.

I'm old; I've watched the withering world too long

To gild illusions. Yet it leaves us lonely,

We cold survivors.

IRAD. "Better so." You too  
Would echo Noah. Never child shall heir

That growing curse that like a river swelled,  
 In which each reckless generation poured  
 Its tributary taint. And yet was not  
 Her soul a thing of wonder, and her life  
 A lamp mysterious, lighted from on high?  
 Is God so wasteful when He plans a world  
 Of such rare marble as the lives of men,  
 He'll count as worthless rubbish every stone  
 Found useless in His building? Will He not,  
 In some great treasure-house beyond the grave,  
 Preserve them still, nay, find them fitting there  
 Into some vast design unhinted here?

TUBAL. Think that which gives you joy. I've  
 watched too long

What mad economy those prodigals  
 Who rule the world employ. And life is hewn  
 From quarries inexhaustible, more cheap  
 Than any wayside stone, 'tis everywhere.  
 My loves have quarried out a thousand blocks;  
 My hate has cracked a thousand. Let it go.  
 Yet a few hours I'll roll into my grave  
 Like a lost pebble. But the time till then,  
 That interval is mine; my life to me  
 As precious as 'tis cheap to God. Nay, boy,  
 Ne'er rack your head nor break your heart against  
 A granite wall. We'll bury her in state.  
 And then we'll live.

IRAD.

Not I. The time is past  
 When thus I reasoned. Were no life beyond,



No justice here, yet in my dying hour,  
If I could feel I'd toiled for something more  
Than life and pleasure, I'd create myself  
What gods denied, and dream it into being;  
Project my spirit through eternity  
From that one hour as center, and drink in  
What earth could never give, the blessed sense  
Of widening sympathy, the calm approval  
Of that still monitor who in our breast  
Weighs good and evil.

TUBAL.                                 Where have you unearthed  
This ancient heirloom conscience? Did gray Noah,  
With other musty relics of old days,  
Preserve you this? I mind when I myself  
Had such a plaything. Memory's a strange world.  
Sometimes there is a kind of phantom boy  
Comes from its realm to vex me.

IRAD.   What was he?

TUBAL. Like and not like to me. He found the  
way  
To fuse the steel from heaven's pelting rocks;  
And he enjoyed some things that you and I  
Would find but tedious. Well, your path is yours,  
And I'll go mine. Pray, can I serve you further?

IRAD. Only, I pray you, see that none intrude  
On our last parting.

TUBAL.                                 None shall dare. Goodnight.

[*Exit Tubal-cain.*]

IRAD (*alone*). How ghastly in the moonlight  
 shows the print  
 Of death upon her features, how unlike  
 The rosy glow of sleep, whose breathing lip  
 Still murmurs with the drowsy whirl of dreams.  
 She tells me nothing. Has she aught to tell?  
 Is she more wise than I, or is all wisdom  
 For her one blank? Shall we e'er meet again?  
 And should we dwell in everlasting joy,  
 Whose joys were all perverted here, what pleasure,  
 Acceptable to God, were sweet to us?  
 Or shall we change our inmost nature so  
 That what was dull grows dear, and former sweet  
 Becomes abhorred? Such fundamental change  
 Would loose the bonds of being, and dissolve  
 All cherished attributes and human ties.  
 Or is all evil such by local laws,  
 Though penal here permissible elsewhere?  
 In vain we query, yet our bankrupt souls,  
 On earth impoverished, long for wealth in Heaven,  
 And knock and knock, though never answered.

Hark,

Thou God entrenched in night and nothingness,  
 Thou God of Noah, who by word and sign  
 Told him the Flood would come. I ask of Thee  
 One token only, which mere man would grant,  
 Had he the power. If those You cancel here,  
 Unfit for earthly needs, find home beyond,

Grow pure beside Thee and are blest indeed,  
 Let the moon shine unclouded while I pace  
 This chamber's length. But if in worlds beyond,  
 Even as in this, we prove abortive seed,  
 And destined for decay, then let yon cloud  
 O'ershade the orb it neighbors, bringing night  
 In my mid journey.

*[He paces slowly the length of the colonnade. The moon meanwhile shines uninterruptedly.]*

Shall I hold it true?  
 The windy vapor licked its golden round,  
 Yet turned and blew not o'er it. Once again,  
 Great Lord of Heaven, now I'll change the sign.  
 If death have life in store, make dark the moon  
 In my mid path; but if 'tis all despair  
 Then keep her beaming.

*[He paces the colonnade again. The moon shines uninterruptedly as before.]*

Ah, 'tis even so.  
 God needs must be, else how had Noah known  
 What never man could guess; but that dread God  
 Has other business in the growing worlds  
 Than cheering wasted lumber. Be it so.  
 Come, thou cold sweetheart, lay thy breast on mine.  
 We're something each to other yet, or were.

We'll pray no longer; God's forgotten us  
In the great plan of things; but we, belovèd,  
We'll not forget. We've yet some hours till dawn.

CURTAIN.

ACT V.

TIME. One or two days later.

PLACE. The edge of the mountain top not far from the temple. The waters are almost on a level with it.

[*Enter Irad and Tubal-cain.*]

TUBAL. The skies grow dark anew.

IRAD. Their gleam of light  
Was sent in mockery. Once again the winds  
Blow damp and boding; clouds entomb the sun,  
Reviving night and fear.

TUBAL. Is ocean rising?

IRAD. Not yet, but soon it must. An evil grin  
Goes wandering o'er its corrugated face,  
Anticipating prey.

TUBAL. A gruesome sight.

IRAD. Ay, is it not? See where for leagues it  
stretches,  
All flecked with foam, like mottled pards at play.  
There swim the rotting planks of nameless wrecks  
That vainly dared the Deluge. Forest trees,  
Washed out from guttered hills, go floating by  
With bones amid their branches. There we read  
Our own to-morrow.

TUBAL. Yonder waits in ocean  
Our old white-bellied friend to give us greeting.  
Well, 'tis his hour. Why should I tear my lungs  
In the vain howl for mercy?

*[Music is heard from the temple.]*

IRAD. What is that?

TUBAL. A knell, or equal. Our good friends  
have sworn,  
Iban and all the rest, if death must come,  
To die like Cainites reveling. Three whole days  
They've kept a banquet sauced with poison waiting  
The signal of the sky. They view it now  
All draped in death. They're at their final feast.  
We two are left.

IRAD. Why drank you not with them?

TUBAL. The mere brute instinct hugging life  
perhaps.  
A tough old leaf am I, that tightly clings  
Even on the wintry tree. Or sportsman's blood,  
That loves to fight the battle out, nor whine  
Because we lose.

IRAD. For two nights past I've had  
A haunting vision, never taking shape,  
But whispering hope and comfort.

TUBAL. Well, to-morrow  
You'll test its prophecy.

IRAD. Not so; it pointed  
Beyond the morrow. If it whisper truth

Death's but a turnstile; if deluding dream,  
 Then let me die deluded; better so  
 Than drugged in drunken stupor.

TUBAL. As you will.  
 I've caused a thousand deaths, nor ever asked  
 About the future; I'll not plague it now  
 For my one funeral.

IRAD. All is hushed behind us.

TUBAL. Yea, Iban's rhapsodies are done. He  
 sleeps,  
 As often earlier, o'er his cup; nor knows  
 What ushers come to bear him hence, nor fears  
 Though they be strange and cold.

IRAD. 'Twere wrong to leave them  
 Neglected as they died while life is ours.  
 Come, let us lay the dead in reverent state,  
 And say a last goodby.

TUBAL. Small care have they  
 Who wrap their winding sheet or close their eyes,  
 We now, or ocean soon. But yet we'll go.

*[Exeunt Irad and Tubal-cain. After a pause the  
 ark of Noah floats near the mountain peak and  
 anchors. Noah appears on it. Enter Irad  
 from the temple with his head bowed in emo-  
 tion.]*

IRAD. I had not thought to care; but such a  
 scene,

The grim burlesque of joyful banquets gone,  
Is ghastly contrast. Ha! what's here?

NOAH. Thou being  
That tread'st this lonely eyrie, marked by God  
Last haven for His chosen, who art thou,  
Survivor or wan phantom?

IRAD. Who I am  
Thou need'st not know nor question. Weigh thine  
anchor  
And get thee gone. This rocky buttress here  
Will crack thy hull like nutshells if the wind  
But veer behind thee.

NOAH. He who wields the wind  
With me is pilot. Thou art gaunt and worn,  
But like to one I knew.

IRAD. If thou knew'st good  
Spare thy dull eulogy; if thou knew'st evil  
I've suffered that should make detraction dumb.  
My part in life is ended; count me dead,  
Nor vex me more. Land not thy laughing crew  
To mock our shore of mourning. Turn thy prow  
To happier havens.

NOAH. Art thou Irad?

IRAD. Nay,  
I'm but a cipher which the waves will wipe  
From off the slate of being.

NOAH. Thou art he.  
Unhappy man, the storms that wrenched thy life  
Have left their traces.



IRAD.                                    Yea, if you would know it,  
The dead have had revenge. Didst think to find me  
Obese and pampered, who have daily watched  
The death of all I loved, and nightly lain  
Upon the rack of conscience? But our nerves  
Grow numb with suffering. Speak whate'er you  
will;

'Tis naught to me.

NOAH.                                    One dear to both of us  
Pursued thy flight.

IRAD.                                    Ask not for him; God took him.  
I would have burned in fire by inches for him.  
Fate willed not so.

NOAH.                                    Ah, well, we held him dead;  
Yet hope dies hard.

IRAD.                                    God curses all who love me.

NOAH. He lives in heaven, is spared the lifelong  
toil  
Of earth's lone pioneers. He died for thee,  
Bequeathing thee to those he loved.

IRAD.                                    Would rather  
This head had been the first that ocean drowned!

NOAH. Arm not thy heart in this defiant mood,  
As if thy kin were foes; nor think reproach  
Is on my lip. What's done is done, abhorred  
Alike by me and thee. Thy past and thou  
Be kept forever separate.

IRAD.                                    Would they were,  
That I, rejoicing, like a babe new-born

Might feel thy love, if thou canst love me still.  
But 'tis not so.

NOAH. Thy gloom has tutored thee  
To read all life awry.

IRAD. Nay, rather turned  
These eyes within to read a truth severe.  
My lesson's learned. I'll blot no more with blood  
The record of my life, which sealed to-night  
Goes up in God's great archives.

NOAH. Heaven forbid!  
The wind of death blows o'er thy rock; the waves  
Already make it slippery. Come with me.  
The love of God is wide, and meaner souls  
Float here to safety; why should one like thine  
Go down in darkness? Haste, embark; we'll steer  
For the glad haven of a fairer world.

IRAD. And wilt thou venture this, remembering  
all?

NOAH. And will I not? I left thy doom to God,  
And God preserved thee. Now I'll fight no more  
Against the welling love within me. Come!

IRAD. Where should I go? to lay foundation  
deep  
For some new world to last till time is gray?  
Wilt thou dig up the grave of Cain, that thence  
The plagues God buried there may walk again,  
And taint thy healthy children?

NOAH. These are words.  
Thou'rt wild with want and suffering.

IRAD. Nay, I'm wise  
 With wisdom burned upon my brain in fire.  
 The love was deep that would have sheltered me,  
 For that God bless thee. But my part in life  
 Is all to cease, my praise and duty there.  
 Thou know'st not what a cursèd heritage  
 Is blood of Cain. With me the evil stream  
 Goes ever underground. No child through time  
 Shall call me father; but the peopled years  
 Will bless my name that I'd no part in them.  
 In that I'll know a patriarch's joy. Go on.  
 Here I remain.

NOAH. Will God count one whose courage  
 Would die as martyr for mankind, to save  
 The nations from himself, unworthy saving?  
 What stolid seaman, picked for life with me,  
 Had dared as much?

IRAD. Perchance, but, brave or mean,  
 Their veins are full of growth and mine decay.  
 If there be life beyond the grave, we'll meet  
 Where we may live forever and be glad.  
 If not, 'twill be some consolation still  
 To gain my long-lost reverence for myself,  
 And die a man.

NOAH. Thou speak'st like one whose purpose  
 Was breathed from God. Who shall gainsay His  
 will?  
 Yet this gray head will whiten in a night  
 If here I leave thee.

IRAD. Mourn not thou for me.  
And yet forget me not, for I may soon  
Live only in thy love.

NOAH. No, life eternal  
Is waiting yonder. God Himself declared it  
By seer and vision.

IRAD. Yea, these gilded creeds,  
I trust them not; in death they ring but hollow.  
Let others lull the heart with lotus dreams  
Of certainties unproved, I scorn their charm.  
But throwing all upon a gambler's chance,  
I'll dare to count the odds and yet believe,  
In blindness clinging.

NOAH. Scorn not thou religion.  
It is the rainbow where the light of truth  
Broke up on human tears, a thing of earth,  
Yet sign of light in heaven.

IRAD. So we'll trust.  
The winds are wheeling round, the waves roll  
inland,  
All churned in froth and dotted deep with rain.  
The storm is here. Begone, nor dare to tarry.  
Thou bear'st a world; wreck not such precious  
freight  
By longer dallying.

NOAH. Yet you will not come?

VOICES FROM THE ARK. There, cut the anchor or  
we're lost! Away!

IRAD (*as the ark floats away*). Farewell! forget  
me not! In our adieu

New world and old forever say goodbye.

NOAH (*from the distance*). God be thy friend!  
We'll meet again beyond.

[*Enter Tubal-cain.*]

TUBAL. The night comes tumbling down like  
caving sand,  
With rain and whirlwind. 'Tis a noble hour  
To bide here lonely with the dead. Hello!  
Ho, Irad, boy!

IRAD. I'm here.

TUBAL. Thy voice is strange.  
Give me thy hand. Is it the ocean spray  
Makes it so clammy cold?

IRAD. No ghost am I,  
If that's your fear. How sweeps before the wind  
The feathery foam; and bolts begin to peal  
And bicker overhead. Were it not easy  
To shock with death beneath such martial music,  
That keys the will to battle? Let it come!

TUBAL. This waiting chills the heart. Would  
ocean took  
Corporeal form with which a man could fight;  
Or sent as champion from its dismal camp  
Some monster of the deep. We'd warm our blood  
In deadly grapple, sweetening with revenge  
The pang of dying.

IRAD.                    How the thunder grows!  
What doors blow to in heaven? who enter there?  
What messengers of haste to tell the news  
That Cain's last remnant dies to-night, the race  
That vexed the eternal council is no more.  
Oblivion absolute beyond belief  
Mows down their memory. Never king nor sage  
Shall model laws from them, nor sculptor view  
Their cunning carvings; bard nor architect  
Be taught by them. Nor shall the coming years  
Know aught except that like a glorious flame  
They burnt and passed away. Their name shall be  
A synonym for all that God abhors;  
And buried deep beneath the wave-washed hills  
Their splendor lie forever, while the law  
By which they perished molds creation still.

FINIS.

**OTHER POEMS**





## ARMISTICE

There lies a world far off in central space  
Where men have perished all, and beast and bird  
Have followed after. Nothing there has life,  
Save the rank vegetation, hiding deep  
In its soft lap of shade and living green  
Forgotten bones and tumbling walls of towns.

Here Michael and the lost archangel once  
Met in their wanderings. Years had passed by  
thousands

Since their last meeting. Sad was Satan's face,  
And sad grew Michael's gazing. Days of old  
Came rushing on the memories of them both,  
When by the courts of God as friend with friend  
They moved, and conscious strength that knew no  
peer

Save in each other, drew their spirits close  
In mutual brotherhood, twin stars of Heaven.

Then Satan spoke: "We meet where man is gone,  
This bone of old contention; nought is here  
To fight for longer; now let battle rest.  
Come, ancient brother, one short day and night  
Let good and evil be a thing forgot,  
And all these bitter centuries. Let us sit  
And talk together here beneath the trees,  
As we were used in Heaven long ago."

And Michael answered not, but doubting stood;

Then Satan took the angel's harp, and sang  
To music sad a song of meaning strange.

And dost thou shrink to clasp thy hand in mine?  
We both are servants of the will Divine,  
And thou shalt know it well by proof and sign  
    In that far day when all shall have reward.  
Nor saviour here art thou, nor tempter I,  
For all the race of man are things gone by;  
None curse me here beneath this empty sky;  
    Why dost thou linger, why am I abhorred?

Nor good nor evil dwells in stones and herbs,  
Or where the hand of God the thunder curbs;  
Nor good nor ill the ocean's deep disturbs;  
    In man alone we ever met and warred;  
Sweet peace was ours before his race began;  
Harsh battle since through all the ages ran;  
Now in this world that hears no more of man  
    Why dost thou linger, why am I abhorred?

Worlds, worlds enough there are where we may  
    meet

To war in peopled square and clashing street;  
But now one hour of armistice were sweet,  
    In deserts wide one fount with living sward.  
Thou knowest not what lonely things we are,  
Cold shadows from the Light that walks afar.  
Come, brother, come; no cause is here for war.  
    Why dost thou linger, why am I abhorred?

Thus sang the Soul of Mystery, and prevailed.  
And all day long upon a grassy knoll,  
Princes of good and evil now no more,  
But friend with friend, they rested. Far below  
In a great valley lay the skeletons  
Of some old battle, whelmed in weeds and fern,  
And roots of banyans curled around their bones.  
Northward, a huge square mass of shimmering  
green,  
Its corners beveled by the wind and rain,  
Vine-clad a crumbling fortress lay. No flag  
Fluttered above its ramparts; none could tell  
If this were tyrant's hold or Freedom's shrine.  
Southward a heap of grassy mounds proclaimed  
Where once had been a city; homes and baths,  
Soft haunts of luring sin and dungeons dread,  
And churches towering Godward,—all were now  
But tangled hillocks and the mantling brier.  
The upas dripped its poison on the ground  
Harmless; the silvery veil of fog went up  
From moldering fen and cold, malarial pool,  
But brought no taint and threatened ill to none.  
Far off, adown the mountain's craggy side  
From time to time the avalanche thundered, sound-  
ing  
Like sport of giant children, and the rocks  
Whereon it smote re-echoed innocently.  
Then in the silence Lucifer again  
Struck music from the angel's harp and sang.

I am the shadow that the sunbeams bring,  
 I am the thorn from which the roses spring;  
 Without the thorn would be no blossoming,  
     Nor were there shadow if there were no gleam.  
 I am a leaf before a wind that blows,  
 I am the foam that down the current goes;  
 I work a work on earth that no man knows,  
     And God works too,—I am not what I seem.

There comes a purer morn, whose stainless glow  
 Shall cast no shadow on the ground below,  
 And fairer flowers without the thorn shall blow,  
     And earth at last fulfill her parent's dream.  
 Oh, race of men who sin and know not why,  
 I am as you, and you are even as I;  
 We all shall die at length, and gladly die;  
     Yet even our deaths shall be not what they seem.

Then Michael raised the golden lyre, and struck  
 A note more solemn soft, and made reply.

There dwelt a doubt within my mind of yore,  
 I sought to end that doubt and labored sore;  
 But now I search its mystery no more,  
     But leave it safe within the Eternal's hand.  
 The tiger hunts the lamb and yearns to kill,  
 Himself by famine hunted, fiercer still;  
 And much there is that seems unmingled ill;  
     But God is wise, and God can understand.

All things on earth in endless balance sway,  
Day chases night and night succeeds the day;  
And so the powers of good and evil may

Work out the purpose that His wisdom planned.  
Eternal day would parch the dewy mold,  
Eternal night would freeze the lands with cold;  
But wise was God who planned the world of old;  
I rest in Him, for He can understand.

Yet good and evil still their wills oppose;  
And, serving both, we still must serve as foes  
On yon far globe that teems with human woes;  
And Sin thou art, though God work through thy  
hand.

But here the race of man is now no more;  
The task is done, the long day's work is o'er;  
One hour I'll dream thee what thou wert of yore,  
Though changed thou art, too changed to under-  
stand.

All day sat Michael there with Lucifer,  
Talking of things unknown to men, old tales  
And memories dating back beyond all time.  
And all night long beneath the lonely stars,  
That watched no more the sins of man, they lay,  
The angel's lofty face at rest against  
The dark cheek scarred with thunder. Morning  
came,  
And each departed on his separate way;  
But each looked back and lingered as he passed.

## THE "MAN-EATER"

The night is calm, nor threatens ill,  
 Save where two glow-worms glimmer still  
 In shadows distant.

Unmoving while the moments go,  
 Beyond the Kaffirs' tents they glow,  
 Bright, strange, insistent.

Beneath the moonlight's ghostly hush  
 Low crouches in the lonely brush  
 A figure tawny,  
 Like some old sphinx in granite carved,  
 With hollow flank and visage starved,  
 And muscles brawny.

Patient, as heathen priests of old  
 Round gods of blood their vigil held,  
 He waits unsleeping,  
 Yet tense as springs of bended steel,  
 With lip drawn back and planted heel,  
 His vigil keeping.

A fearful god he worships there,  
 To whom our fathers offered prayer  
 When earth was younger,  
 A power for whom those burning eyes  
 Are altar lamps of sacrifice,  
 The god of hunger.

## EARLY DEATH

Down in the grasses that girdle the stream

Sits she in light where the summer is warm,  
Claiming the promise of maidenhood's dream,

Weaving the wonders the future may form.  
Daisies in dozens are round on the mold,  
One she has plucked and its petals has told  
To a rime that her grandmother chanted of old.

Rich man—poor man—beggar man—thief,  
Doctor—lawyer—merchant—chief.

Which shall it be that the sibyls unfold,

Hero or hireling, the weak or the well,  
Poverty's shadow or sunshine of gold?

Nay, I could tell thee but shudder to tell.  
Wan are thy features and wistful to see;  
Others may dream of a bridegroom to be,  
But what have such maidens in common with thee?

Rich man—poor man—beggar man—thief,  
Doctor—lawyer—merchant—chief.

Rich is he, rich with the plunder of time,

Poor in the pity a lover should bring,  
Beggar he is for the joy of thy prime,  
Thief of thy youth and the dream of thy spring;  
Doctor he is who all sorrow can heal,  
Lawyer whose pleading no tongue can gainsay,

Merchant whose traffic no lip may reveal,

Chieftain of chieftains whom all must obey.

Slowly drop through thy fingers lean

Petal and prophecy,—can it mean

That thou knowest the bridegroom who comes  
unseen?



## VOICES FROM ELFLAND

## I. THE APPEAL OF THE FAIRIES

We make our home among the gurgling brooks,  
Or through the woods beneath the fragrant pine;  
We tent beneath the autumn leaves, and float  
O'er star-lit lake on flower and walnut shell.

A happy life is ours, we never knew  
The pain or grief or care that mortals know,  
Nor ever steeped within our bubbling cup  
The stagnant herb of bitter melancholy.

Yet oft the groans of mortals, and the breath  
Of passionate storms that shake their spirits, come  
To jar our placid world. The victim's blood  
Flows gross and feverish from his burning heart  
Around our dewy grass; and everywhere  
We hear the voice of aspirations vain,  
Till the hot air is from your cities blown  
As from a prairie fire. We come to loathe  
Your fierce extremes, your hate, your sultry kiss,  
Your joys that burn themselves to pain, your all.  
We hate your crucifix, for there survives  
Man's endless anguish on the dying face;  
We hate your creed, which forces on our lives  
Your alien sorrows; grief has made your drops  
Of holy water scald like burning tears.

Sweet flow the hours when ye are far away;

Beneath the moon we lie at rest, and breathe  
 The scent of leaf and blade, and water-falls  
 Made pure by winnowing air. And blest it was,  
 Ere man had lived, o'er earth to roam at will  
 By tranquil lake and laughing sea, and valleys  
 Where never grave was dug nor tear was shed,  
 While yet the world was ours, nor yet had come  
 With you the clamorous war of sense and soul.

Mad creatures, mixed of clay and fire, whose eyes  
 Are blinded with your tears, whose ears are deaf  
 With dying sobs, that ye nor see nor hear  
 When hills are fair and cataracts call aloud,  
 What do ye in this lovely world of ours?  
 Here, like a stranded fish or drowning bird,  
 With glazing eyes, in foreign wonderlands  
 Ye pant for wonders in far, kindred worlds,  
 And live not here nor there. Then leave to us  
 This earth, whose use you never understand.  
 Here, when your stormy race has ceased to be,  
 On moon-lit nights our happy feet will dance  
 Above your grassy hillocks, undisturbed  
 By those burnt ashes from Prometheus' torch.

## II. THE STOLEN CHILD

Beneath the reddening oak tree Margery found  
 A crowd of little people, some in green,  
 And some in red and brown. In the faint light  
 Their dress seemed all of withered autumn leaves.  
 The dim, gray twilight and the starbeams mixed

Above their quaint, peaked faces, and grotesque  
Unchildlike forms, that yet were childish small.

Then one among them blew a trumpet flower;  
And all the rest from harps of elder, strung  
With spider's film, or else through flutes of grass  
Sent up a piping music, mixed with song.

"Come, little princess, come with us," they sang;  
"We waited long; and long has waited too  
Your happy home with us, your fairy home.  
'Tis dark and none will miss you. Sweet it is  
In elfland. Little princess, come with us.

Our fathers lived with yours in Paradise  
Ere Adam sinned; brothers they were, so close  
Were once our bloods. We are the only race  
Who never ate the sad Forbidden Tree.  
Man ate, and good and evil tear him daily;  
The angels ate, and even their joys are stern;  
And Satan ate, we will not talk of him,  
Nor know him. Little princess, come with us.

But all the elves through all the years have lived  
Like happy children; still for us alone  
The old untainted Eden breathes from clumps  
Of hazel thicket or from running brook,  
Or orchards dropping with the peach and pear.  
Where evil is not is no need of good;  
And where nor good nor evil is, is peace  
And peaceful dream, all the sweet, innocent joy  
Of childhood. Little princess, come with us.

You are our cousin, so we come to love you;

You dream like us, and so we understand you;  
You are a child, we'll keep you so forever.  
If you grow old with men, the fatal juice  
Of that sad Tree will work within your veins  
Hopes never satisfied, and maddening storms  
You wish not. Little princess, come with us."

Dusk deepened into night, and morning came;  
But Margery came not, nor was seen again.

## THE LAST NIGHT OF CAPUA

## I

Far off beneath the stars  
    Camped cold on dewy grass  
The wolf-nursed brood of Mars,  
    Hacked helm and stained cuirass,  
    And shields of dinted brass.

The old centurion's cheek  
    Wrinkled with laughter grim;  
"Dream-children of the Greek,  
    Who soften heart and limb  
    O'er lyre and bumper's brim,

"Ye had your gold and pearls,  
    Your feast and perfumed bath,  
Your song and laughing girls;  
    Ye had, the Roman hath;  
    Now wake and feel his wrath.

"Strength rules the world and will,  
    The strength despising joy  
That lives but to fulfill;  
    Such force shall Rome employ  
    To build, or to destroy."

## II

High arched the halls and rich  
 O'er gem and purple gown;  
 From fount and graven niche  
 The marble gods looked down  
 On those in Capua's town.

Rare wine in golden bowls  
 The mantling poison held,  
 While o'er their parting souls  
 Luxurious music swelled,  
 Their sires had loved of eld.

"Farewell to life," they cried,  
 "To Rome defiant scorn;  
 Like men we lived and died,  
 And drank from Plenty's horn  
 Glad night and joyous morn.

"White arms have lulled our rest,  
 Old wine has warmed our veins;  
 We shared with friend and guest  
 Carved hall and chiming strains,  
 And all that Greece contains.

"Jeer on, ye Roman powers,  
 Who toil, ye know not why;  
 The wiser choice was ours,  
 Strength to be glad and die;  
 Sweet were the days gone by.

“Life’s fairest gift we gained,  
Soft bliss and golden ease;  
Now that the cup is drained  
Let Rome enjoy the lees.”  
So darkness covered these.

## THE COMING OF PEACE

"When cometh Peace?" the heathen wailed of old  
 From rack and blazing home; and God replied:  
 "Not yet, while passions fierce and uncontrolled  
 Make Peace a nation's harlot, not a bride.  
 Not while the pang that searches nerve and vein  
 Alone can rouse to life the stagnant soul  
 In brutal lands, where ease from war and strain  
 But heralds lust and fills the drunkard's bowl."

"When cometh Peace?" went up the Orient's groan.  
 Not yet, while life becomes it own worst foe  
 With teeming birth, and War's red axe alone  
 Through human forest hews the room to grow;  
 Not yet, while power is still the victim's dream,  
 And tyranny the meanest slave's delight,  
 Where Tamerlane and Ghengis Khan but seem  
 Composite pictures of the men they smite.

"When cometh Peace?" is now the world's appeal.  
 Not yet, though far her hastening steps we hear;  
 Not while her bristling angels, armed in steel,  
 On cowering lands impose the truce of fear,  
 Not while we force a code on murmuring foes  
 Which our own rulers violate and annul;  
 Not while the only peace each nation knows  
 Would give themselves the Land Debatable.



“When cometh Peace?” Upon the mountains now  
Those beauteous feet the gladsome tidings bear;  
But I shall see her bridal not, nor thou;  
Nor man shall win till man has learned to wear.  
No cry of bards, no long-conferring kings  
Shall ever make the battle’s thunder dumb;  
When winter’s blasts are o’er the violet springs,  
When earth is ripe for Peace then Peace will  
come.

THOUGHTS ON OPENING WEBSTER'S  
DICTIONARY

I turn with awe this ponderous volume o'er,  
This household counselor, these finely wrought  
And hammered keys that open door on door  
Through the vast treasury of a people's thought.

I linger here o'er Milton's quoted phrase  
As Indian rajahs o'er a diamond may,  
And see sometimes within its facets blaze  
A gleam that flashed from God's eternal day.

And these old roots of words, that seem to stand  
So dull and dry upon the printed page,  
Take on beneath imagination's hand  
The charm of history and the rime of age.

Here's evolution more than Darwin taught  
In these ancestral footprints; here behold  
The spirit growth of nations, word and thought  
Developing each other from of old.

What spirit first upon his lonely beach  
Felt solitude like ocean round him roll,  
And launched the ships of passion-laden speech,  
Columbus-like, to find a brother soul?

What words were those that ventured outward  
bound,

Those clumsy craft, those first rude pioneers,  
Where now the mighty galleons of sound  
Waft on the thought of twice a thousand years?

Were they the brute's low call of pain and greed,  
Or sounds man echoed back and knew not why?  
Or growing notes to voice a growing need,  
Like Caliban's half-formulated cry?

And through the centuries since what change was  
here

As click and guttural's broken hints were turned  
To spirit-molded music, breathing clear,  
To bear what Plato dreamed and Newton  
learned.

Still 'mid the minds that think and hearts that feel,  
Expressing what was never yet expressed,  
New ships of sound are launched on chiming keel,  
To bear some new Columbus through the west.

Still many a word is token and no more,  
Frail envoy of a thought no speech can bear;  
Who shall interpret, say, these letters four,  
This one word "Life"? The universe is there.

Or take this other, "Love"; its meanings go  
From height to depth through vast creation's  
whole,

From flowers that waft their pollen to and fro  
To God's all-seeing eye and moving soul.

And here, the joy of life, the balm of death,  
The star of martyrs, comfort of mankind,  
Is this word "Faith," a syllable, a breath,  
A marsh-fire's lamp, and boundless night behind.

Brave Webster, noble Webster, you did well;  
But yet through many a year must language  
grow

Ere man to man shall have the power to tell  
One half the things that now we think we know.

## A VISION OF EVIL

I saw a realm at midnight still,  
    (Who knows if this be dream or true?)  
Where earth's discarded souls of ill  
    The scorn of God together blew.  
There floats unceasing to and fro  
    The chaff from heaven's threshing floor,  
Through endless ages waning slow,  
    For evil fades for evermore.

They waste like leaves on winter's tree;  
    (Who knows if this be dream or true?)  
The newly come are fair to see,  
    As when they walked with me and you.  
But souls of eld are faint and thin  
    Like vapors blown on ocean shore,  
And life is moldering deep within,  
    For evil fades for evermore.

There moves Napoleon splendid still,  
    (Who knows if this be dream or true?)  
With flashing eyes and kingly will,  
    As when he rode to Waterloo.  
But Timur scarce has form of man,  
    And pride and memory all are o'er;  
The stars gleam through his phantom wan,  
    For evil fades for evermore.

The queen Antonius loved and kissed,  
    (Who knows if this be dream or true?)  
Is thinner now than parting mist,  
    And mind and will have withered too.  
And nought is left of Priam's boy,  
    Who drew the ships to Ilion's shore,  
For, sinful wrath or selfish joy,  
    All evil fades for evermore.

And round them moves, a ghostly blur,  
    (Who knows if this be dream or true?)  
The Soul of Evil, Lucifer,  
    As he has done the ages through.  
He thinks no more of thrones and wars,  
    No trace is his of glory o'er;  
He floats like fog across the stars,  
    His power is fading evermore.

## WASTED SEEDS

The seed that never grew  
Had life within the germ;  
But skies withheld their dew,  
And fields but gave the worm;  
What matter? Earth has seeds to spare and not a  
few.

The soul that never bloomed  
Had dreams of God within;  
But want its life consumed,  
And curse for others' sin;  
What matter? Earth has souls enough though  
these were doomed.

The tribe that fades away  
Had visions fair as we;  
But withered stalks are they,  
Whose race shall cease to be;  
What matter? Earth has tribes enough though  
these decay.

What matter? Yet the cry  
Goes up and is not stilled;  
Life's verdure waxes high  
Where love and wisdom tilled;  
But who shall hush the sob of wasted seeds that die?

THE BUTTERFLY

THE MAN

Dancer throned at Summer's board,  
Butterfly,  
Even while thy wine is poured  
Death is nigh.  
One short hour of balm and sun  
Thou hast had;  
Lo, at thy feast the skeleton;  
Why so glad?

THE INSECT

Hast thou ever known extreme  
Joys and fears?  
Did not then a moment seem  
Like to years?  
When thy heart was keen with grief,  
Or with glee,  
Were not hours to others brief  
Long for thee?  
Time's a word; whole worlds are found  
In drops of dew,  
And eternity's vast round  
In moments few.



While I sip the wine of youth  
From the cup,  
Dreams that last as long as truth  
Bubble up.  
Ages past and more to come  
Live I through  
While but once the pendulum  
Swings for you.  
When I part from summer's beam,  
Leaf and flower,  
All eternity will seem  
But an hour.

## THE MAN

Art thou fly or Psyche, thou,  
Learned so deep?  
What do human spirits now,  
Do they sleep?

## THE INSECT

Fly or Psyche, who can tell?  
A voice am I,  
Speaking things you shall know well  
By and by.  
Life for me will be forgot  
When I am through;  
You must ask your Father what  
It is for you.

Yet if they sleep, a dream has blest  
The eyes that slept  
Which all eternity compressed  
Within it kept.

## THE ORIOLE

Chorister of air,  
On the bough of spring,  
What melodious throat and where  
Taught thee thus to sing?  
From what isle remote  
Out of man's control,  
Came thy clear, untroubled note,  
Oriole?

What did Eden lose  
That doth here endure,  
Gushing forth as waters ooze,  
Effortless and pure?  
Why can I not know,  
God in shape and rôle,  
Whence thy heart rejoices so,  
Oriole?

When God made thy brain  
Like a silver bell,  
Forged He other nerves of pain,  
Other joys as well?  
Was the dream that poured  
Music in thy soul  
Older than the Flaming Sword,  
Oriole?

Nay, too surely, bird,  
 More thy song conveyed  
 Through this human brain that heard  
 Than the brain that made.  
 Not thy voice, but one  
 Echoing in my soul,  
 Hints all truth, revealing none,  
 Oriole.

Yet at Wisdom's feet  
 Was learned thy mimic trill;  
 Soulless echoes thus repeat  
 God on Horeb's hill.  
 Deep in learning's maze  
 Delve we like the mole;  
 Thou hast drunk the Maker's days,  
 Oriole.

Truths there are that here  
 Reason cannot find,  
 Where her eyes are piercing clear,  
 Nathless color-blind.  
 Lights there are whose hues  
 Change creation's whole,  
 Which thy thoughtless song renews,  
 Oriole.

Music like thy staves  
Surely ne'er can flow  
From our gilded galley-slaves,  
Living but to row.  
Mightier lamps are dark,  
Dry wick and empty bowl;  
What oil has fed thy tiny spark,  
Oriole?

God, whose fingers press  
Life's unthinking keys,  
Pouring thoughts that none express  
Through such pipes as these,  
When the skies are rent  
Like a rending scroll  
Tell me what Thy music meant,  
Thy oriole.

THE NIGHT-WATCH

*(From a painting representing lions prowling at night around the ruins of Nineveh.)*

Slowly at midnight lone  
Round dust and nodding stone  
Of Nineveh o'erthrown

The night-watch makes its round,  
Bright burning eyes of awe,  
Low purr and stealthy paw,  
Soldiers that know no law  
Which man has found.

Well might the Buddhist seer  
Think buried kings severe  
Came back incarnate here

In kindred beasts of prey.  
And so we too the while,  
Half with a doubting smile,  
May dream, while that grim file  
Moves on its way.

Speak, thou mysterious guard,  
Lank cheek and body scarred,  
Find ye your penance hard

Through all this vast of time,

Souls of the kings of eld,  
Who against God rebelled,  
Proud of the realms ye held,  
    Drunken with crime?

Where now your answers glib,  
Starved throat and hollow rib,  
Long-fanged Sennacherib,  
    Tiglath with yellow mane?  
What wine has vengeance poured  
In realms yet unexplored  
For those who by the sword  
    Slay and are slain?

Say, has a power been found  
More strong than monarchs crowned?  
Have those sharp swords you ground  
    Failed there, so mighty here?  
Have ye no truth to tell  
Might fit the present well,  
Where still your sons would swell  
    The reign of fear?

Here where your wine ye quaffed,  
At captives' anguish laughed,  
And notched the hunter's shaft,  
    What thoughts to-night are yours?  
Cannot those silent jaws  
Ope once in Mercy's cause,  
To tell us God has laws  
    And God endures?

Pass on with stealthy tread,  
Brutes ravening to be fed,  
Or souls of tyrants dead,  
    Whiche'er ye be, goodnight.  
O'er Nineveh's decay  
For lions comes the day,  
And for dead kings the sway  
    Of Peace and Right.



## SHAKESPEARE TO IMOGEN

Dear saint, my soul was marred and stained  
That built thy shrine;  
But holy, sweet, and unprofaned  
It treasured thine.

Let this reveal while I and thou  
Through years endure,  
How worldly, sinful men may bow  
To women pure.

Thou art not I, but art of me,  
My child of thought,  
The thing that I had longed to be,  
And yet was not.

## TRUTH

Truth veiled her face from men  
In days of eld;  
Glimpses alone since then  
Have we beheld.

The Hebrew moved aside  
That curtain's fold;  
"Worship is truth," he cried  
O'er rituals old.

The Greek with trembling hand  
That face laid bare;  
What he could understand  
Was Beauty there.

Her veil the Roman drew  
With martial awe;  
He saw but what he knew,  
And whispered, "Law."

The monk of Europe dreamed  
In cloisters dim;  
As inward vision seemed  
Her face to him.

And we in glimpses rare  
On that high brow,  
O'er rights that all may share  
See Freedom now.

Ah, Truth, the world's long dream  
    But shows us thee  
As in some whirling stream  
    The stars we see.

Sweet face in fragments glassed  
    On waves that break,  
Who shall from these at last  
    Thy image make?

THE DIVINE COMEDY OF TO-DAY

INFERNO

Three faces in the crowd;  
    What saw'st thou there?  
Like Farinata's one was scarred and proud,  
And still for all its pride left quivering bare  
    Sin's agonized despair.

PURGATORIO

Three souls amid the crowd;  
    They passed like dreams;  
With tearful eyes the second head was bowed;  
But o'er it shone, like light on bitter streams,  
    The sorrow that redeems.

PARADISO

Three worlds amid the crowd,  
    So near yet far;  
Joy kindled all the third like burning cloud;  
Love rose, like Beatrice from her mystic car,  
    To lead from star to star.

Three faces in the crowd,  
    Life old and new.  
Oh, soul of Dante, thus by God endowed,  
Six centuries men have lived and died since you;  
    And yet your song is true.

## A FAIRY STORY

*“Now tell me why is your hair so white,  
You stern old man from across the way;  
And why did you wait so long to-night  
By the grassy grave where the roses lay?”*  
*“You are young, my child, and to understand  
You must live and suffer for many a day;  
Come, I’ll tell you a story of fairy land,  
To help you in whiling the hours away.”*

Far under the wilds of the storm-swept snow  
In the silent caves of the Northern Pole,  
Where over the plains the whirlwinds blow,  
Was the home of the elf-king Imranole.  
All bright with silver and veined with gold  
Were those caverns hammered by gnome and  
troll;  
But lonely ever and wintry cold  
Was the heart of the elfin Imranole.  
But once on a night that was fierce with frost,  
When the ice would burn you like burning coal,  
A mortal maiden, whose way was lost,  
Came, none know how, to the Northern Pole.  
The icicles hung in her yellow hair  
As her trembling feet o’er the threshold stole;  
Without was the dark and the polar bear,  
And she made her dwelling with Imranole.

Never a whisper nor mortal sound  
 Was heard in those caves of the Northern Pole,  
 Where the maiden sat as the years rolled round,  
 Taught and tended by gnome and troll,  
 Till her terror died, and a mighty love  
 Over her heart like music stole;  
 And the bridal lamps gleamed bright above,  
 As she knelt by her lover, soul to soul.  
 But there came a call from the realms of death,  
 From the God of Sorrows, whom none control,  
 So hard is heaven to earth beneath;  
 And she died on the bosom of Imranole.  
 They laid her deep in the frozen clay,  
 And heaped the snow in a wintry knoll,  
 Where the Northern Lights at midnight play  
 O'er the buried bride of the Northern Pole.  
 And there when the winds blow wild and bleak  
 From ancient glacier and icy shoal,  
 The tear drops freeze on the withered cheek  
 Of a lonely watcher,—'tis Imranole.  
 His hair streams white on the howling blast,  
 And his beard waves white, like a floating scroll;  
 And I know his grief by a sorrow past,  
 And the silent bond of a kindred soul.

*“But really, truly, and was it so,  
 You stern old man from across the way?  
 And why is your voice so strange and low,  
 And why are you crying at what you say?”*

*“O child, sometime you will understand,  
My friends are few, and my head is gray;  
But this was a story of fairy land,  
And the Northern Pole is far away.”*

## THE SEACOAST IN WINTER

The stinging winds alternate freeze and burn;  
 Chill gleams the twilight where the sun went  
 down,

Four threads of cloud across it, faint and stern,  
 Like scars across the lost archangel's frown.

Cold, dark, forbidding heaves the wintry surge;  
 The frozen rocks are drenched with icy spray;  
 One lonely steamer on the horizon's verge  
 Seems numbed and torpid, crawling on its way.

A fierce, strange thrill pervades all out-of-doors,  
 Grip of wild hands, half friendly and half foe;  
 The iron night grows darker down the shores;  
 Suffering yet glad I breast the winds that blow.

Here stirs the life that warmed the old sea-kings  
 To scourge the laggard blood in heart and vein,  
 The warrior joy that like Athena springs  
 Full armed and conquering from the head of  
 Pain.



## SCHOOL-GIRLS

They pass like flowers afloat  
On summer air,  
Gold locket at the throat  
And wind-kissed hair.

Still fresh the dew of youth  
Around them falls;  
Through visions robed like truth  
The future calls.

Speak not, their dream revere;  
Yet mourn we may  
For other school-girls here  
Who dreamed as they.

How fare those now for whom  
Life beckoned splendid?  
Unlike their dream and doom,  
Their vision ended.

No mighty grief nor wrong  
Could they disclose;  
Dream tragedies are song,  
But life's are prose.

Yet mournful from the past  
Their words float hither:  
"Few hopes will thunder blast;  
But many wither."

THE EVENTLESS TRAGEDY

A DYING WOMAN SPEAKS

Sister, remain and watch to-night.

There are ghastly hours between twelve and  
morn ;

And I think of what never has come to light,  
Of all in my life that has died unborn,  
Till the air seems filled with the whisperings  
Of the haunting ghosts of the unborn things,  
Now that my evil and good are done.

There was love, twofold in its mystic thrill,  
With its soft inweaving of will in will,  
And two worlds made one through the eyes of two ;  
But its death was old ere its life was new.

And Sloth and Mammon bend hushed above  
The beautiful face of that still-born Love,  
Now that my sordid life is done.

There were voices of children in elflands green,  
With a mother's ease like a hedge between ;  
Eyes she had longed for and dreamed of seeing,  
Eyes that she never had called to being.

And the air seems filled with the moan forlorn  
Of the clinging ghosts of the babes unborn,  
Now that my indolent life is done.

There was joy of nature and song and art,  
That I might have nursed in my lonely heart,  
Soft shoots that time would have rendered firm.  
But they shrank and withered in bud and germ.  
And my hours of boredom are confined there  
Where the thoughts of the mighty were mine to  
share,  
Now that my aimless life is done.

There was need without and my wealth within,  
And the pleasure that makes us of God's own kin  
In a sympathy wide as the race of man.  
But its whispers died ere they well began.  
And the clerks of hell are in Midnight's tent  
To audit the books of the trust I spent,  
Now that my thoughtless life is done.

There were life-giving dreams for that near unseen,  
That died in the march of our dull routine,  
Things that God never had meant to die,  
But we killed them within me—the world and I—  
*And the shades are in judgment, the doom defer-*  
*ring*  
*Of a soul that quickened and died in stirring;*  
*And the clocks of midnight are tolling one*  
*For a life that was ended but ne'er begun,*  
*For a life that was wasted, and now—is done.*

## THE VISIT TO THE OLD FARM

Far lies the cramped and clanging street  
Where now my paths of life are cast;  
Like withered leaves the buried past  
Seems rustling here around my feet.

No tree that buds on all these lands,  
Nor tumbling wall, nor sagging rail,  
Nor tufted sod on plain or swale,  
But bears the touch of buried hands.

'Tis haunted ground, rock, hill, and spring.  
Five generations of my dead  
Have worn it with their lifelong tread,  
And made the soil a kindred thing.

In dreams through changing visions rolled  
Forgotten toil my hands pursue,  
While wakes the spell my childhood knew,  
The unlonely loneliness of old.

Again behind the plowman's share  
The robin pecks with watchful eye;  
And through the blue and boundless sky  
The darting swallows wheel in air.

The daisy falls, a twinkling spark,  
Where through the grass the mower drives;  
And childlike shrinks between the knives  
The flower that bore the meadow lark.

Through yonder woods in winter hoar,  
When drearily moans the forest bleak,  
And frost makes tree and timber creak,  
We fell the hermit trunks once more.

Loud rings the axe in woodlands lone;  
And gnarlèd oak and tapering ash  
With warning crack and shattering crash  
Come thundering down on bush and stone.

Penurious life it was, and hard;  
But boundless sweep of vale and hill  
Enringed our day, and vast and still  
Looked down the night from heaven o'er-  
starred.

Streams choose a random course, but then  
Flow ever there; our youth no less  
Builds random laws of happiness  
By which we laugh or weep as men.

Still breathes the charm from rock and fall,  
From sprouting corn and crumpled fern,  
Lone, somber, sexless, dumb, and stern,  
But luring as the siren's call.

Still solitude will own her child,  
And harsh old mother Nature hers;  
Unlaid the ghost of memory stirs,  
The dream, the summons of the wild.

ON PLACING A TOMBSTONE OVER MY  
FATHER'S GRAVE

The air is hushed, and quiet all the scene;  
In sunlight gleam the kindred graves around;  
As o'er these summer grasses, springing green,  
We place this stone above this lowly mound.

Unmarked he lived and unregarded died  
Who slumbers here; much dared, endured, and  
willed;  
Seemed great to friends and God and none beside,  
Foundation deep where fates denied to build.

Yet, dust beloved, couldst thou but know how crowd  
Thick coming memories round thy noteless bed,  
Thou might'st be proud to know thy children proud  
Of their unknown, unstained, unconquered dead.

Obscure and shunned the path 'twas his to go,  
Yet one at which the boldest heart might quail,  
Through bitter, hopeless years descending slow  
Disease's dark, Apollyon-haunted vale.

Despair and anguish round on every hand,  
And Reason rocking on her crumbling throne,  
Few sympathizing, none to understand,  
He fought his dreary fight unhelped, alone.

The hero's death is all his children's pride.  
Is not his praise as great who dared to live,  
When every day in lingering pain he died,  
And death was all that life had left to give?

Less brave than Plassey's conquering chief or more  
Was he, who watched through nights with anguish  
long,  
To shun, Ulysses-like, that fatal shore  
Where floats the opiate siren's drowsy song?

Failed every hope whence youths their manhood  
draw;  
And Reason setting knew what night ensued;  
Such foes as happier courage never saw  
Walked through the dusk, and found him unsub-  
dued.

And still his love for those he left behind,  
While yet one spark of dying memory stayed,  
Like sunset flames lit up that ruined mind,  
Till darkness gathering wrapped the whole in  
shade.

O father flesh and brother spirit, still  
From out thy dust thy voice ascends to me;  
Whene'er in life shall bend my wavering will  
Here will I kneel and draw in strength from thee.

Thine was the Roman face and Roman soul  
Of old Pompeii's sentry; father, thou  
Saw'st clouds more dread than his o'er heaven roll,  
Stood'st faithful at thy post, and sleepest now.

Thou need'st no further honor, art but one  
Of many more, a long, unnoticed line;  
Yet not in vain thy nameless task was done;  
The strength of nations roots in graves like thine.

Here o'er his dust we raise this humble stone;  
And be the dying words of Paul for him,  
"A goodly fight I fought, my race I won,  
My faith I kept." Away, the night grows dim.



## THE FAREWELL TO REASON

Sweet Comforter of other years,  
I hear thy soft withdrawing tread;  
Thy voice is yet within mine ears,  
But sounds like echoes from the dead.

Now child and drudge and Folly hoar  
Shall share at least some glimpse of thee;  
But, blest Interpreter, no more  
Shall thou and I companions be.

We traced the dome that Darwin piled,  
With Herschel saw the planets roll,  
And oft the evening hours beguiled  
With Mozart's lyre and Plato's scroll.

Through thee the voice of wife and friend  
Came chiming soft and silver clear;  
'Twas thine those angel notes to blend  
Which ruined mind shall never hear.

But now these chords too finely spun,—  
This spirit-harp within my brain,—  
I feel them snapping one by one,  
Amid the dread no words explain.

I see behind the Flaming Sword,  
The vales of Eden trod no more;  
And bitter, dark, and unexplored  
The alien deserts wait before.

## THE CORN-HUSKERS

OR OLD NEW ENGLAND

In open field in autumn weather  
We sat and husked the corn together;  
No sound was heard but far and low  
The rumbling cart and cawing crow.

The weather-beaten shocks around  
Seemed hermits old with sun embrowned,  
Above the stubble gaunt and bare  
You half might think they knelt in prayer.

We spoke of him by Avon's stream,  
Of Byron's fire and Shelley's dream,  
What Huss endured and Luther wrought,  
And Berkeley's fairy world of thought.

Still fast the yellow ears we stripped  
Across the basket's edges slipped,  
The withered stalks our fingers stirred  
Kept rustling time to every word.

No scholars we; but hearts that long,  
Find much where most they reason wrong;  
And Truth herself seemed speaking near  
By withered husk and ripened ear.

Now o'er the stubble gaunt and bare  
Plods on the foreign hireling there;  
And thou and I in autumn weather  
No more shall husk the corn together.

With chilling blood and weary brow  
I change romance for knowledge now;  
And thou beneath the moldering ground  
No longer tell'st what thou hast found.

## THE FAMILY BIBLE

Grave Book of Ages, hope in hours of terror  
 For those who now shake hands with truth divine,  
 Some say thy reign is done, thy wisdom error,—  
 But rule thou still my father's house and mine.

God never meant between thy leaves to send us  
 Reply to all our questions, urged in vain;  
 His truth, like ocean's flood, is too tremendous  
 For human cup to hold, or lip to drain.

But still in pondering o'er these mighty questions  
 Which none but God can solve, through thee we  
 grow  
 More like to God, who knows them; vague sugges-  
 tions  
 Enlarge the spirit-cup where truth may flow.

And round thy solemn text, by buried fathers  
 Made corner-stone of council, fort, and shrine,  
 A crowd of thoughts from years forgotten gathers,  
 A spirit margin, glossing every line.

That margin is the comment of the ages  
 On doubt and answer, faith, and good, and sin,  
 The truth that man read into these old pages  
 No less the truth than that inscribed within.

Whate'er this book had first of God's bestowing,  
Direct or not its message from above,  
Round it, like vines upon a trellis growing,  
Hang now our sweetest flowers of thought and  
love.

The martyr's blood its cherished page has blotted;  
Dumb worlds grew vocal round it, "ay" or  
"nay";  
Dead lips have kissed it; tears the words have  
spotted  
Which say that God shall wipe all tears away.

O star of morning, dim in shadows darkling,  
Faint hint of light no mortal eyes can bear,  
Like Galahad's Grail I see thy promise sparkling  
Above the dead to bid me follow there.

From out thy page the wakened visions flying  
Like sibyls' leaves are scattered to and fro.  
I ask, and seem to hear a voice replying,  
"Man grows by asking, though he ne'er may  
know."











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