

PR 5075
.A2 P6



PYGMALION AND
THE IMAGE BY
WILLIAM MORRIS
ILLUSTRATED WITH
PICTURES BY SIR ED-
WARD BURNE-JONES



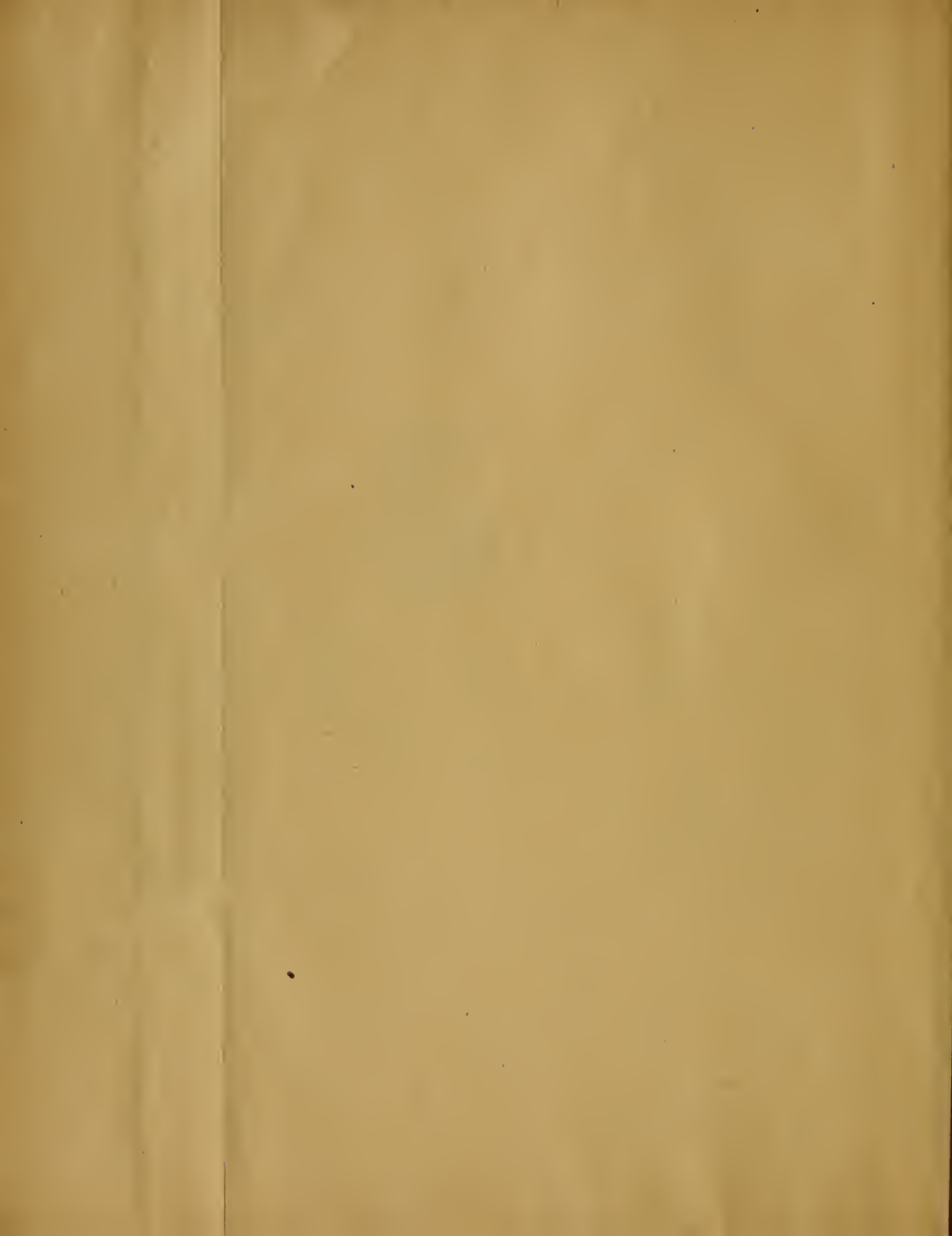


Class PR 5075

Book A 2 P 6

Copyright N^o _____

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.







PYGMALION AND THE IMAGE



William Morris

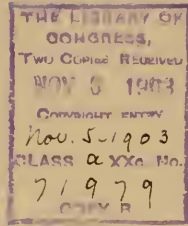
From the painting by G. F. Watts, R.A.

PYGMALION AND 
THE IMAGE BY   
WILLIAM MORRIS
ILLUSTRATED WITH
PICTURES BY SIR ED-
WARD BURNE-JONES



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY
NEW YORK R·H·RUSSELL
PUBLISHER MCMIII

FR 5075
.A2 P6



Copyright, 1903
By ROBERT HOWARD RUSSELL

Published October, 1903

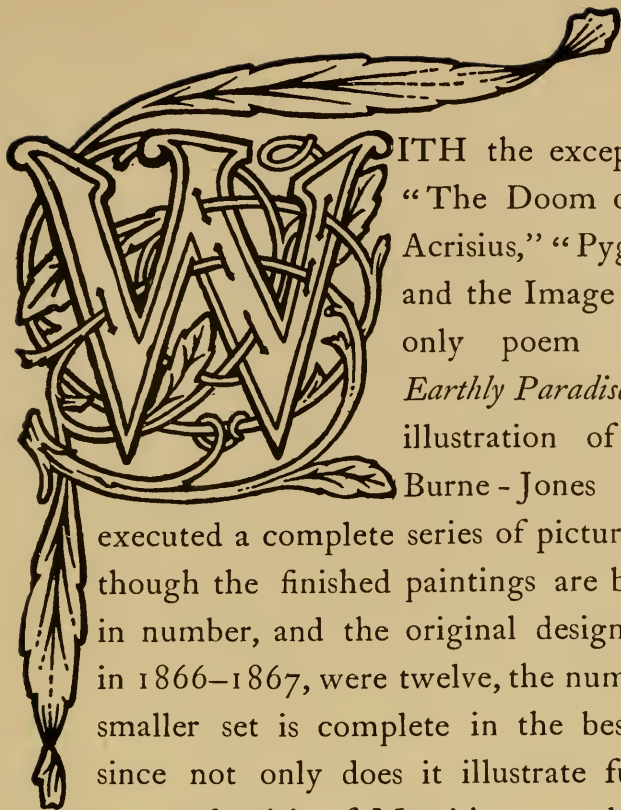
• • • • •
• • • • •
• • • • •
• • • • •

• • • • •
• • • • •
• • • • •
• • • • •

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

BY SIR EDWARD BURNE-JONES, BART.

<i>Portrait of William Morris</i>	Frontispiece	✓
<small>From the painting by G. F. Watts, R.A.</small>		
<i>The Heart Desires</i>	PAGE	8 ✓
<i>The Hand Refrains</i>	“	16 ✓
<i>The Godhead Fires</i>	“	24 ✓
<i>The Soul Attains</i>	“	32 ✓



WITH the exception of "The Doom of King Acrisius," "Pygmalion and the Image" is the only poem of *The Earthly Paradise* for the illustration of which Burne-Jones actually executed a complete series of pictures; and though the finished paintings are but four in number, and the original designs, made in 1866-1867, were twelve, the numerically smaller set is complete in the best sense, since not only does it illustrate fully the text and spirit of Morris's poem, but each picture in it, though finished with the loving care and elaboration which Burne-Jones lavished on his paintings, fails of its full significance unless considered in its relation to the series of which it forms a part.

In regard to the poem itself, the inspiration
vii

of these pictures, even the most casual study will bring in its train a conviction that the story as told by William Morris is far superior to any other version of classic or of modern times. The poem (one of the best of those comprised in *The Earthly Paradise*) is homogeneous and admirably balanced in all its parts; its superiority, however, over all other versions, is not due primarily to the manner of its narration, but arises from its greater spirituality—a finer feeling rather than a finer form. Prior to the appearance of “Pygmalion and the Image” each narrator of the legend had dwelt mainly on the physical side, sensuous or sensual according to his temperament, of the tale. In Morris’s version the dominant note is the passionate delight—enthusiasm verging upon madness—of the artist and craftsman in his own handiwork, reflecting, to a marked degree, Morris’s own temperament, one of the leading characteristics of which was his habit of hurling himself headlong into each

new project as it claimed his attention from time to time. That he was prevented thereby from arriving at perfection in any one art need not lessen the admiration due to him for his whole-souled (though usually short-lived) absorption in many and diverse arts. A great poet, in the sense that Chaucer, his master and model, was great, Morris was not; but no one can deny to him the title of an enthusiastic and skilled craftsman of verse. It is this love of craftsmanship for its own sake, joined to a remarkable feeling for decorative beauty which both possessed, that binds the pictures of Burne-Jones and this poem by Morris so closely together that they form one perfect whole. Even the ideal and wholly imaginary world in which their figures move is the same—a land where emotion rather than passion bears sway, where the fates of man and of woman are determined by a whim of the gods rather than dominated by the chivalrous or devout hardihood of the individual.

In his "Apology" prefixed to *The Earthly Paradise*, Morris clearly and definitely disclaims any moral purpose in the poems comprised in it.

"Why should I strive to set the crooked straight?" he writes. How far this feeling was shared by Burne-Jones we can never know, but nearly all of his biographers are agreed that a love of beauty, as he understood it, was his main preoccupation, or, to use his own words, that a picture should be a "beautiful, romantic dream." Julia Cartwright, in her *Life and Work of Sir Edward Burne-Jones*, says: "He never tried to point a moral or to teach a lesson; but he rescued beauty from the forgetfulness to which it seemed doomed in a restless and material age, and in so doing has given us an example of the highest value." Malcolm Bell, also, writing of the art of Burne-Jones and of its critics, expresses a like opinion, and his analysis of the paintings composing the Pygmalion Series is not only interesting in itself, but is especially so as showing

the extent to which the man of letters can read his own interpretation into the work of a painter.

“The four pictures from ‘The Story of Pygmalion,’” he writes, “also included in *The Earthly Paradise*, again show this preference of the poet and the artist for the spirit before the form, provided only the last be beautiful. The first, ‘The Heart Desires,’ is the idealization of unsatisfied longing for the unknown. Pygmalion, a tall, dark-haired young man, in a long garment falling in straight folds to his feet, stands brooding on life’s emptiness in the vestibule of his house. A sculptured group of the Three Graces denotes his profession and at the same time typifies the cold beauty of artifice, the beauty of the mind, while two girls, seen through the open door, speeding along the street in the artless embrace of innocent maidenhood, represent the beauty of the body and the love that waits his winning; but in neither finds he consolation. In the second, ‘The Hand Refrains,’ the days of long labor are ended, and
xi

the artist's ideal, the cold, pure figure of the yet soulless image stands finished on the still rough pedestal, surrounded by flakes and chips of marble and implements of the sculptor's craft, while Pygmalion, chisel and mallet in hand, stays gazing in awe at the marvel his hand has achieved, his eyes content, but his soul still hungering. Outside the window behind him women go about their daily business in the city street, and through another casement, in a recess between him and the image, is a glimpse of a garden and a spurt of water falling into a marble basin—the constant dropping that wears away the stone, as his constant prayers shall move the goddess Venus to a miracle on his behalf. The third bears the motto, 'The Godhead Fires.' Into the sculptor's chamber, silent and solitary, while Pygmalion is away in the temple, floats lightly the Queen of Love, clad in a soft, transparent robe, flower-crowned and bearing a branch of myrtle, emblem of marriage rites, her feet brushed and environed

by the white wings of her favorite doves. Towards her, leaning both arms on one uplifted from the goddess's side, an exquisite piece of composition, the awakening image stoops from the carved capital, blossom-strewn by the adoring Pygmalion, her eyes raised in awe up to the goddess, who with fixed gaze and pointed finger inspires her with the Promethean fire of life. Lastly, 'The Soul Attains.' Heart and soul are alike satisfied. Pygmalion kneels, looking up in trembling worship at the beautiful creature who lingeringly yields him her hands, though she still gazes out beyond him in dumb amazement at the mystery of consciousness that has suddenly been born in her. Marble no longer, but not yet altogether woman."

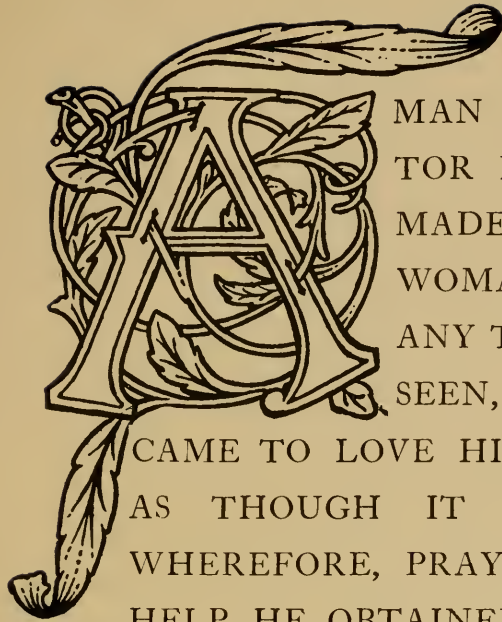
"Dreamer of dreams, born out of my due time," is even more appropriate to Burne-Jones than to its author, William Morris, and it is an ever-to-be-regretted misfortune that two poems only of those comprised in *The Earthly Paradise*

xiii

should have received at his hands that illuminative pictorial treatment which he, "the arch-dreamer of the nineteenth century," as Cosmo Monkhouse styles him, alone could give. Thanks to Mr. Frederick Hollyer, we have in the reproductions which follow faithful transcripts, in all but color, of the original paintings, and can carry out, after the lapse of a quarter of a century and in another hemisphere, a project which both Burne-Jones and William Morris held dear, but which neither of them lived to see realized. To their memory this book, together with the recently re-issued *Doom of King Acrisius*, is dedicated.

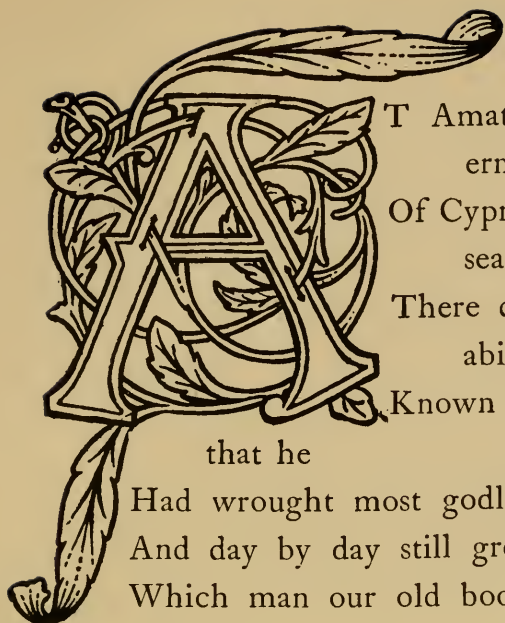
FITZROY CARRINGTON.

ORIENTA COTTAGE,
MAMARONECK, NEW YORK,
DECEMBER ELEVENTH, 1902



MAN OF CYPRUS, A SCULPTOR NAMED PYGMALION, MADE AN IMAGE OF A WOMAN, FAIRER THAN ANY THAT HAD YET BEEN SEEN, AND IN THE END CAME TO LOVE HIS OWN HANDIWORK AS THOUGH IT HAD BEEN ALIVE: WHEREFORE, PRAYING TO VENUS FOR HELP, HE OBTAINED HIS END, FOR SHE MADE THE IMAGE ALIVE INDEED, AND A WOMAN, AND PYGMALION WEDDED HER.

WILLIAM MORRIS



T Amathus, that from the south-
ern side

Of Cyprus looks across the Syrian
sea,

There did in ancient time a man
abide

Known to the island-dwellers, for
that he

Had wrought most godlike works in imagery,
And day by day still greater honor won,
Which man our old books call Pygmalion.

Yet in the praise of men small joy he had,
But walked abroad with downcast, brooding face.
Nor yet by any damsel was made glad;
For, sooth to say, the women of that place
Must seem to all men an accursed race,
Who with the turner of all hearts once strove,
So in their hearts must carry lust for love.

Now on a day it chanced that he had been
About the streets, and on the crowded quays,

Rich with unopened wealth of bales, had seen
The dark-eyed merchants of the Southern seas
In chaffer with the base Propœtides,
And heavy-hearted gat him home again,
His once-loved life grown idle, poor, and vain.

And there upon his images he cast
His weary eyes, yet little noted them,
As still from name to name his swift thought passed,
For what to him was Juno's well-wrought hem,
Diana's shaft, or Pallas' olive-stem?
What help could Hermes' rod unto him give,
Until with shadowy things he came to live?

Yet note, that though, while looking on the sun,
The craftsman o'er his work some morn of spring
May chide his useless labor never done,
For all his murmurs, with no other thing
He soothes his heart, and dulls thought's poisonous sting,
And thus in thought's despite the world goes on;
And so it was with this Pygmalion.

Unto the chisel must he set his hand,
And slowly, still in troubled thought must pace
About a work begun, that there doth stand,
And still returning to the self-same place,
Unto the image now must set his face,
And with a sigh his wonted toil begin,
Half loathed, half loved, a little rest to win.

The lessening marble that he worked upon,
A woman's form now imaged doubtfully,
And in such guise the work had he begun,
Because when he the untouched block did see
In wandering veins that form there seemed to be,
Whereon he cried out in a careless mood,
"O lady Venus, make this presage good !

"And then this block of stone shall be thy maid,
And, not without rich golden ornament,
Shall bide within thy quivering myrtle-shade."
So spoke he, but the goddess, well content,
Unto his hand such godlike mastery sent,

That like the first artificer he wrought,
Who made the gift that woe to all men brought.

And yet, but such as he was wont to do,
At first indeed that work divine he deemed,
And as the white chips from the chisel flew
Of other matters languidly he dreamed,
For easy to his hand that labor seemed,
And he was stirred with many a troubling thought,
And many a doubt perplexed him as he wrought.

And yet, again, at last there came a day
When smoother and more shapely grew the stone,
And he, grown eager, put all thought away
But that which touched his craftsmanship alone;
And he would gaze at what his hands had done,
Until his heart with boundless joy would swell
That all was wrought so wonderfully well.

Yet long it was ere he was satisfied,
And with his pride that by his mastery

This thing was done, whose equal far and wide
In no town of the world a man could see,
Came burning longing that the work should be
E'en better still, and to his heart there came
A strange and strong desire he could not name.

The night seemed long, and long the twilight seemed,
A vain thing seemed his flowery garden fair ;
Though through the night still of his work he dreamed,
And though his smooth-stemmed trees so nigh it were
That thence he could behold the marble hair,
Naught was enough, until with steel in hand
He came before the wondrous stone to stand.

No song could charm him, and no histories
Of men's misdoings could avail him now—
Nay, scarcely seaward had he turned his eyes
If men had said, "The fierce Tyrrhenians row
Up through the bay; rise up and strike a blow
For life and goods"; for naught to him seemed dear
But to his well-loved work to be anear.

Then vexed he grew, and, knowing not his heart,
Unto himself he said, "Ah, what is this
That I who oft was happy to depart
And wander where the boughs each other kiss
'Neath the west wind, now have no other bliss
But in vain smoothing of this marble maid,
Whose chips this month a drachma had outweighed?"

"Lo! I will get me to the woods and try
If I my woodcraft have forgotten quite,
And then, returning, lay this folly by,
And eat my fill, and sleep my sleep anight,
And 'gin to carve a Hercules aright
Upon the morrow, and perchance indeed
The Theban will be good to me at need."

With that he took his quiver and his bow,
And through the gates of Amathus he went,
And towards the mountain slopes began to go,
Within the woods to work out his intent.
Fair was the day, the honied bean-field's scent

The west wind bore unto him ; o'er the way
The glittering, noisy poplar leaves did play.

All things were moving ; as his hurried feet
Passed by, within the flowery swath he heard
The sweeping of the scythe, the swallow fleet
Rose over him, the sitting partridge stirred
On the field's edge ; the brown bee by him whirred,
Or murmured in the clover flowers below ;
But he with bowed-down head failed not to go.

At last he stopped, and, looking round, he said,
“Like one whose thirtieth year is well gone by,
The day is getting ready to be dead ;
No rest, and on the border of the sky
Already the great banks of dark haze lie ;
No rest—what do I midst this stir and noise?—
What part have I in these unthinking joys?”

With that he turned, and towards the city gate
Through the sweet fields went swifter than he came,

And cast his heart into the hands of fate ;
Nor strove with it, when higher 'gan to flame
That strange and strong desire without a name ;
Till panting, thinking of naught else, once more
His hand was on the latch of his own door.

One moment there he lingered, as he said,
“Alas! what should I do if she were gone?”
But even with that word his brow waxed red
To hear his own lips name a thing of stone,
As though the gods some marvel there had done,
And made his work alive ; and therewithal,
In turn, great pallor on his face did fall.

But with a sigh he passed into the house ;
Yet even then his chamber door must hold,
And listen there, half blind and timorous,
Until his heart should wax a little bold ;
Then, entering, motionless and white and cold,
He saw the image stand amidst the floor
That whitened was by labor done before.

The Heart Desires



Blinded with tears, his chisel up he caught,
And, drawing near and sighing, tenderly
Upon the marvel of the face he wrought,
E'en as he used to pass the long days by ;
But his sighs changed to sobbing presently,
And on the floor the useless steel he flung,
And, weeping loud, about the image clung.

“Alas!” he cried, “why have I made thee, then,
That thus thou mockest me? I know indeed
That many such as thou are loved of men,
Whose passionate eyes poor wretches still will lead
Into their net, and smile to see them bleed ;
But these the gods made, and this hand made thee,
Who wilt not speak one little word to me.”

Then from the image did he draw aback
To gaze on it through tears ; and you had said,
Regarding it, that little did it lack
To be a living and most lovely maid ;
Naked it was, its unbound locks were laid

Over the lovely shoulders ; with one hand
Reached out, as to a lover, did it stand ;

The other held a fair rose over-blown ;
No smile was on the parted lips, the eyes
Seemed as if even now great love had shown
Unto them, something of its sweet surprise,
Yet saddened them with half-seen mysteries,
And still midst passion maiden-like she seemed,
As though of love unchanged for aye she dreamed.

Reproachfully beholding all her grace,
Pygmalion stood, until he grew dry-eyed,
And then at last he turned away his face
As if from her cold eyes his grief to hide ;
And thus a weary while did he abide,
With nothing in his heart but vain desire,
The ever-burning, unconsuming fire.

But when again he turned his visage round
His eyes were brighter and no more he wept,

As if some little solace he had found,
Although his folly none the more had slept,
Rather some new-born, god-sent madness kept
His other madness from destroying him,
And made the hope of death wax faint and dim;

For, trembling and ashamed, from out the street
Strong men he called, and faint with jealousy
He caused them bear the ponderous, moveless feet
Unto the chamber where he used to lie,
So in a fair niche to his bed anigh,
Unwitting of his woe, they set it down,
Then went their ways beneath his troubled frown.

Then to his treasury he went, and sought
For gems for its adornment, but all there
Seemed to his eager eyes but poor and naught,
Not worthy e'en to touch her rippled hair.
So he, departing, through the streets 'gan fare,
And from the merchants at a mighty cost
Bought gems that kings for no good deed had lost.

These, then, he hung her senseless neck around,
Set on her fingers, and fair arms of stone,
Then cast himself before her on the ground,
Praying for grace for all that he had done
In leaving her untended and alone ;
And still with every hour his madness grew
Though all his folly in his heart he knew.

At last asleep before her feet he lay,
Worn out with passion, yet this burning pain
Returned on him, when with the light of day
He woke and wept before her feet again ;
Then of the fresh and new-born morning fain,
Into his garden passed, and therefrom bore
Fresh spoil of flowers his love to lay before.

A little altar, with fine gold o'erlaid,
Was in his house, that he a while ago
At some great man's command had deftly made,
And this he now must take and set below
Her well-wrought feet, and there must red flame glow

About sweet wood, and he must send her thence
The odor of Arabian frankincense.

Then as the smoke went up, he prayed and said,
"Thou, image, hear'st me not, nor wilt thou speak,
But I perchance shall know when I am dead,
If this has been some goddess' sport, to seek
A wretch, and in his heart infirm and weak
To set her glorious image, so that he,
Loving the form of immortality,

"May make much laughter for the gods above:
Hear me, and if my love misliketh thee
Then take my life away, for I will love
Till death unfear'd at last shall come to me,
And give me rest, if he of might may be
To slay the love of that which cannot die,
The heavenly beauty that can ne'er pass by."

No word, indeed, the moveless image said,
But with the sweet, grave eyes his hands had wrought

Still gazed down on his bowed, imploring head ;
Yet his own words some solace to him brought,
Gilding the net wherein his soul was caught
With something like to hope, and all that day
Some tender words he ever found to say ;

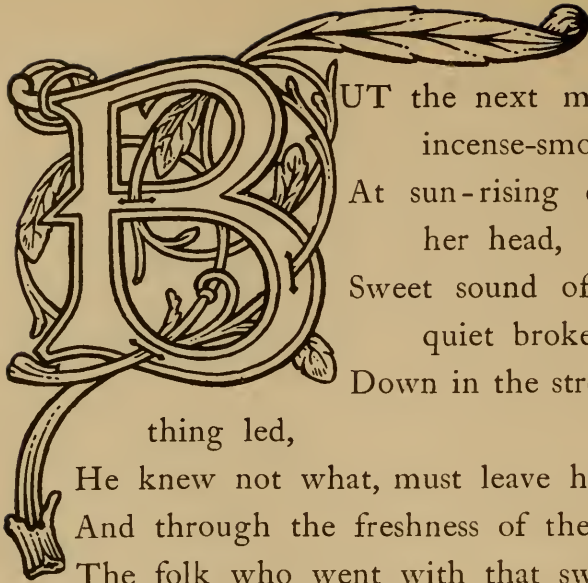
And still he felt as something heard him speak ;
Sometimes he praised her beauty, and sometimes
Reproached her in a feeble voice and weak,
And at the last drew forth a book of rhymes,
Wherein were writ the tales of many climes,
And read aloud the sweetness hid therein
Of lovers' sorrows and their tangled sin.

And when the sun went down, the frankincense
Again upon the altar-flame he cast,
That through the open window floating thence
O'er the fresh odors of the garden passed ;
And so another day was gone at last,
And he no more his lovelorn watch could keep,
But now for utter weariness must sleep.

But in the night he dreamed that she was gone,
And, knowing that he dreamed, tried hard to wake,
And could not, but, forsaken and alone,
He seemed to weep as though his heart would break;
And when the night her sleepy veil did take
From off the world, waking, his tears he found
Still wet upon the pillow all around.

Then at the first, bewildered by those tears,
He fell a-wondering wherefore he had wept,
But suddenly remembering all his fears,
Panting with terror, from the bed he leapt;
But still its wonted place the image kept,
Nor moved for all the joyful ecstasy
Wherewith he blessed the day that showed it nigh.

Then came the morning offering, and the day,
Midst flowers and words of love and kisses sweet,
From morn, through noon, to evening passed away;
And scarce unhappy, crouching at her feet,
He saw the sun descend the sea to meet;
And scarce unhappy through the darkness crept
Unto his bed, and midst soft dreaming slept.



UT the next morn, e'en while the
incense-smoke

At sun-rising curled round about
her head,

Sweet sound of 'songs the wonted
quiet broke

Down in the street, and he by some-
thing led,

He knew not what, must leave his prayer unsaid,

And through the freshness of the morn must see

The folk who went with that sweet minstrelsy;

Damsels and youths in wonderful attire,
And in their midst upon a car of gold
An image of the Mother of Desire,
Wrought by his hands in days that seemed grown old,
Though those sweet limbs a garment did enfold,
Colored like flame, enwrought with precious things,
Most fit to be the prize of striving kings.

Then he remembered that the manner was
That fair-clad priests the lovely Queen should take



The Hand Refrains



Thrice in the year, and through the city pass,
And with sweet songs the dreaming folk awake;
And through the clouds a light there seemed to break
When he remembered all the tales well told
About her glorious, kindly deeds of old.

So his unfinished prayer he finished not,
But, kneeling, once more kissed the marble feet,
And, while his heart with many thoughts waxed hot,
He clad himself with fresh attire and meet
For that bright service, and with blossoms sweet
Entwined with tender leaves he crowned his head,
And followed after as the goddess led.

But long and vain unto him seemed the way
Until they came unto her house again;
Long years, the while they went about to lay
The honey-hiding dwellers on the plain,
The sweet companions of the yellowing grain
Upon her golden altar; long and long
Before, at end of their delicious song,

They stripped her of her weed with reverent hands
And showed the ivory limbs his hand had wrought ;
Yea, and too long e'en then ere those fair bands,
Dispersing here and there, the shadow sought
Of Indian spice-trees o'er the warm sea brought,
And toward the splashing of the fountain turned,
Mocked the noon sun that o'er the cloisters burned.

But when the crowd of worshippers was gone,
And through the golden dimness of the place
The goddess' very servants paced alone,
Or some lone damsel murmured of her case
Apart from prying eyes, he turned his face
Unto that image made with toil and care,
In days when unto him it seemed most fair.

Dusky and dim, though rich with gems and gold,
The house of Venus was. High in the dome
The burning sunlight you might now behold ;
From nowhere else the light of day might come,
To curse the Shame-faced Mother's lovely home ;

A long way off the shrine, the fresh sea-breeze,
Now just arising, brushed the myrtle-trees.

The torches of the flower-crowned, singing band
Erewhile, indeed, made more than daylight there,
Lighting the painted tales of many a land,
And carven heroes, with their unused glare ;
But now a few soft, glimmering lamps there were,
And on the altar a thin, flickering flame
Just showed the golden letters of her name.

Blue in the dome yet hung the incense-cloud,
And still its perfume lingered all around ;
And, trodden by the light-foot, fervent crowd,
Thick lay the summer flowers upon the ground,
And now from far-off halls uprose the sound
Of Lydian music, and the dancer's cry,
As though some door were opened suddenly.

So there he stood, that help from her to gain,
Bewildered by that twilight midst of day ;

Downcast with listening to the joyous strain
He had no part in, hopeless with delay
Of all the fair things he had meant to say;
Yet, as the incense on the flame he cast,
From stammering lips and pale these words there passed:

“O thou forgotten help, dost thou yet know
What thing it is I need, when even I,
Bent down before thee in this shame and woe,
Can frame no set of words to tell thee why
I needs must pray? Oh, help me or I die!
Or slay me, and in slaying take from me
Even a dead man’s feeble memory.

“Say not thine help I have been slow to seek;
Here have I been from the first hour of morn,
Who stand before thy presence faint and weak,
Of my one poor delight left all forlorn;
Trembling with many fears, the hope outworn
I had when first I left my love, my shame,
To call upon thine oft-sung, glorious name.”

He stopped to catch his breath, for as a sob
Did each word leave his mouth; but suddenly,
Like a live thing, the thin flame 'gan to throb
And gather force, and then shot up on high
A steady spike of light, that drew anigh
The sunbeam in the dome, then sank once more
Into a feeble flicker as before.

But at that sight the nameless hope he had,
That kept him living midst unhappiness,
Stirred in his breast, and with changed face and glad
Unto the image forward must he press
With words of praise his first word to redress;
But then it was as though a thick, black cloud
Altar and fire and ivory limbs did shroud.

He staggered back, amazed and full of awe;
But when, with anxious eyes, he gazed around,
About him still the worshippers he saw
Sunk in their wonted works, with no surprise
At what to him seemed awful mysteries;

Therewith he sighed and said, "This, too, I dream,
No better day upon my life shall beam."

And yet for long upon the place he gazed
Where other folk beheld the lovely Queen;
And while he looked the dusky veil seemed raised,
And everything was as it erst had been;
And then he said, "Such marvels I have seen
As some sick man may see from off his bed—
Ah, I am sick, and would that I were dead!"

Therewith, not questioning his heart at all,
He turned away and left the holy place,
When now the wide sun reddened towards his fall,
And a fresh west wind held the clouds in chase;
But coming out, at first he hid his face,
Dazed with the light, and in the porch he stood,
Nor wished to move or change his dreary mood.

Yet in a while the freshness of the eve
Pierced to his weary heart, and with a sigh

He raised his head and slowly 'gan to leave
The high, carved pillars; and so presently
Had passed the grove of whispering myrtles by,
And, mid the many noises of the street,
Made himself brave the eyes of men to meet.

Thronged were the ways with folk in gay attire,
Nursing the end of that festivity;
Girls fit to move the moody man's desire
Brushed past him, and soft, dainty minstrelsy
He heard amid the laughter, and might see,
Through open doors, the garden's green delight,
Where pensive lovers waited for the night;

Or resting dancers round the fountain drawn,
With faces flushed unto the breeze turned round,
Or wandering o'er the fragrant, trodden lawn,
Took up their fallen garlands from the ground;
Or languidly their scattered tresses bound,
Or let their gathered raiment fall adown,
With eyes downcast beneath their lovers' frown.

What hope Pygmalion yet might have, when he
First left the pillars of the dreamy place,
Amid such sights had vanished utterly.
He turned his weary eyes from face to face,
Nor noted them, as at a lagging pace
He gat towards home, and still was murmuring,
“Ah, life, sweet life! the only godlike thing!”

And as he went, though longing to be there
Whereas his sole desire awaited him,
Yet did he loath to see the image fair,
White and unchanged of face, unmoved of limb,
And to his heart came dreamy thoughts and dim
That unto some strange region he might come,
Nor ever reach again his loveless home.

Yet soon, indeed, before his door he stood,
And, as a man awaking from a dream,
Seemed waked from his old folly; naught seemed good
In all the things that he before had deemed
At least worth life, and on his heart there streamed



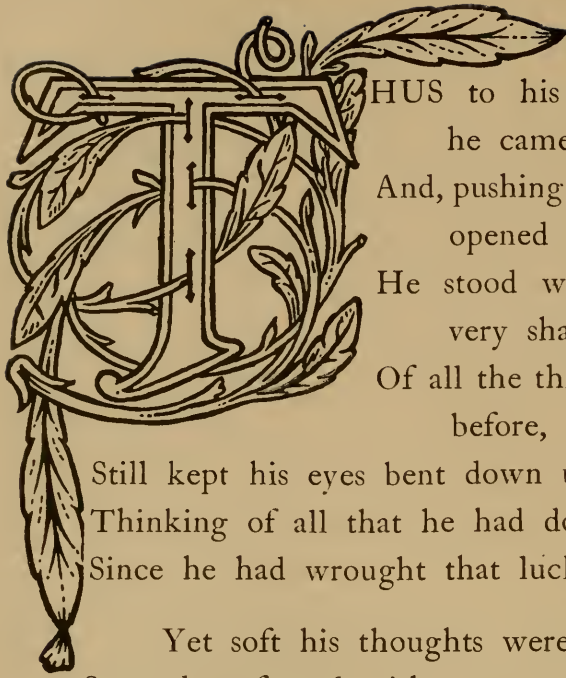
The Godhead Fires



Cold light of day—he found himself alone,
Reft of desire, all love and madness gone.

And yet for that past folly must he weep,
As one might mourn the parted happiness
That, mixed with madness, made him smile in sleep;
And still some lingering sweetness seemed to bless
The hard life left of toil and loneliness,
Like a past song too sweet, too short, and yet
Immeshed forever in the memory's net.

Weeping he entered, murmuring, "O fair Queen,
I thank thee that my prayer was not for naught;
Truly a present helper hast thou been
To those who faithfully thy throne have sought!
Yet, since with pain deliverance I have bought,
Hast thou not yet some gift in store for me,
That I thine happy slave henceforth may be?"



HUS to his chamber at the last
he came,
And, pushing through the still half-
opened door,
He stood within; but there, for
very shame
Of all the things that he had done
before,

Still kept his eyes bent down upon the floor,
Thinking of all that he had done and said
Since he had wrought that luckless marble maid.

Yet soft his thoughts were, and the very place
Seemed perfumed with some nameless heavenly air;
So gaining courage, did he raise his face
Unto the work his hands had made so fair,
And cried aloud to see the niche all bare
Of that sweet form, while through his heart again
There shot a pang of his old yearning pain.

Yet while he stood, and knew not what to do
With yearning, a strange thrill of hope there came,

A shaft of new desire now pierced him through,
And therewithal a soft voice called his name;
And when he turned, with eager eyes aflame,
He saw, betwixt him and the setting sun,
The lively image of his lovèd one.

He trembled at the sight, for though her eyes,
Her very lips, were such as he had made,
And though her tresses fell but in such guise
As he had wrought them, now was she arrayed
In that fair garment that the priests had laid
Upon the goddess on that very morn,
Dyed like the setting sun upon the corn.

Speechless he stood, but she now drew anear,
Simple and sweet as she was wont to be,
And once again her silver voice rang clear,
Filling his soul with great felicity,
And thus she spoke: "Wilt thou not come to me,
O dear companion of my new-found life,
For I am called thy lover and thy wife?"

“Listen, these words the Dread One bade me say
That was with me e’en now, *Pygmalion*,
My new-made soul I give to thee to-day,
Come, feel the sweet breath that thy prayer has won,
And lay thine hand this heaving breast upon!
Come, love, and walk with me between the trees,
And feel the freshness of the evening breeze.

“Sweep mine hair round thy neck; behold my feet,
The oft-kissed feet thou thoughtst should never move,
Press down the daisies! draw me to thee, sweet,
And feel the warm heart of thy living love
Beat against thine, and bless the Seed of Jove,
Whose loving, tender heart hath wrought all this,
And wrapped us both in such a cloud of bliss.

“Ah, thou art wise to know what this may mean!
Sweet seem the words to me, and needs must I
Speak all the lesson of the lovely Queen;
But this I know, I would we were more nigh,
I have not heard thy voice but in the cry

Thou utteredst then, when thou believedst gone
The marvel of thine hands, the maid of stone.”

She reached her hand to him, and with kind eyes
Gazed into his; but he the fingers caught
And drew her to him, and midst ecstasies
Passing all words, yea, wellnigh passing thought,
Felt that sweet breath that he so long had sought,
Felt the warm life within her heaving breast
As in his arms his living love he pressed.

But as his cheek touched hers he heard her say,
“Wilt thou not speak, O love? Why dost thou weep?
Art thou then sorry for this long-wished day,
Or dost thou think perchance thou wilt not keep
This that thou holdest, but in dreamy sleep?
Nay, let us do the bidding of the Queen,
And hand in hand walk through thy garden green;

“Then shalt thou tell me, still beholding me,
Full many things whereof I wish to know;

And as we walk from whispering tree to tree
Still more familiar to thee shall I grow,
And such things shalt thou say unto me now
As when thou deemedst thou wast quite alone,
A madman, kneeling to a thing of stone."

But at that word a smile lit up his eyes,
And therewithal he spake some loving word,
And she at first looked up in grave surprise
When his deep voice and musical she heard,
And clung to him as somewhat grown afeard;
Then cried aloud and said, "O mighty one!
What joy with thee to look upon the sun!"

Then into that fair garden did they pass,
And all the story of his love he told;
And as the twain went o'er the dewy grass,
Beneath the risen moon could he behold
The bright tears trickling down; then, waxen bold,
He stopped and said, "Ah, love, what meaneth this?
Seest thou how tears still follow earthly bliss?"

Then both her white arms round his neck she threw,
And, sobbing, said: "O love, what hurteth me?
When first the sweetness of my life I knew,
Not this I felt; but when I first saw thee
A little pain and great felicity
Rose up within me, and thy talk e'en now
Made pain and pleasure ever greater grow."

"O sweet," he said, "this thing is even love,
Whereof I told thee; that all wise men fear,
But yet escape not; nay, to gods above,
Unless the old tales lie, it draweth near.
But let my happy ears, I pray thee, hear
Thy story, too, and how thy blessed birth
Has made a heaven of this once lonely earth."

"My sweet," she said, "as yet I am not wise,
Or stored with words, aright the tale to tell;
But listen: when I opened first mine eyes
I stood within the niche thou knowest well,
And from mine hand a heavy thing there fell,

Carved like these flowers, nor could I see things clear,
And but a strange, confused noise could hear.

“At last mine eyes could see a woman fair,
But awful as this round, white moon o’erhead.
So that I trembled when I saw her there,
For with my life was born some touch of dread,
And therewithal I heard her voice, that said,
‘Come down, and learn to love and be alive,
For thee, a well-prized gift, to-day I give.’

“Then on the floor I stepped, rejoicing much,
Not knowing why, not knowing aught at all,
Till she reached out her hand my breast to touch;
And when her fingers thereupon did fall,
Thought came unto my life, and therewithal
I knew her for a goddess, and began
To murmur in some tongue unknown to man.

“And then, indeed, not in this guise was I;
No sandals had I, and no saffron gown,

The Soul Attains



But naked as thou knowest utterly,
E'en as my limbs beneath thine hand had grown;
And this fair, perfumed robe then fell adown
Over the goddess' feet, and swept the ground,
And round her loins a glittering belt was bound.

“But when the stammering of my tongue she heard
Upon my trembling lips her hand she laid,
And spoke again: ‘Nay, say not any word;
All that thine heart would say I know unsaid,
Who even now thine heart and voice have made;
But listen rather, for thou knowest now
What these words mean, and still wilt wiser grow.

““Thy body, lifeless till I gave it life,
A certain man, my seryant, well hath wrought.
I give thee to him as his love and wife,
With all thy dowry of desire and thought,
Since this his yearning heart hath ever sought.
Now from my temple is he on the way,
Deeming to find thee e'en as yesterday.

“Bide thou his coming by the bed-head there,
And when thou seest him set his eyes upon
Thine empty niche, and hearest him cry for care,
Then call him by his name, Pygmalion,
And certainly thy lover hast thou won;
But when he stands before thee silently,
Say all these words that I shall teach to thee.’

“With that she said what first I told thee, love,
And then went on: ‘Moreover, thou shalt say
That I, the daughter of almighty Jove,
Have wrought for him this long-desired day;
In sign whereof these things that pass away,
Wherein mine image men have well arrayed,
I give thee for thy wedding-gear, O maid.’

“Therewith her raiment she put off from her,
And laid bare all her perfect loveliness,
And, smiling on me, came yet more anear,
And on my mortal lips her lips did press,
And said, ‘Now herewith shalt thou love no less

Than Psyche loved my son in days of old.
Farewell. Of thee shall many a tale be told.'

“And even with that last word was she gone—
How, I know not—and I my limbs arrayed
In her fair gifts, and waited thee alone.
Ah, love, indeed the word is true she said,
For now I love thee so, I grow afraid
Of what the gods upon our heads may send—
I love thee so, I think upon the end.”

What words he said? How can I tell again
What words they said beneath the glimmering light?
Some tongue they used unknown to loveless men
As each to each they told their great delight,
Until for stillness of the growing night
Their soft, sweet, murmuring words seemed growing loud,
And dim the moon grew, hid by fleecy cloud.

THE END

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 017 197 108 1