



Parzival

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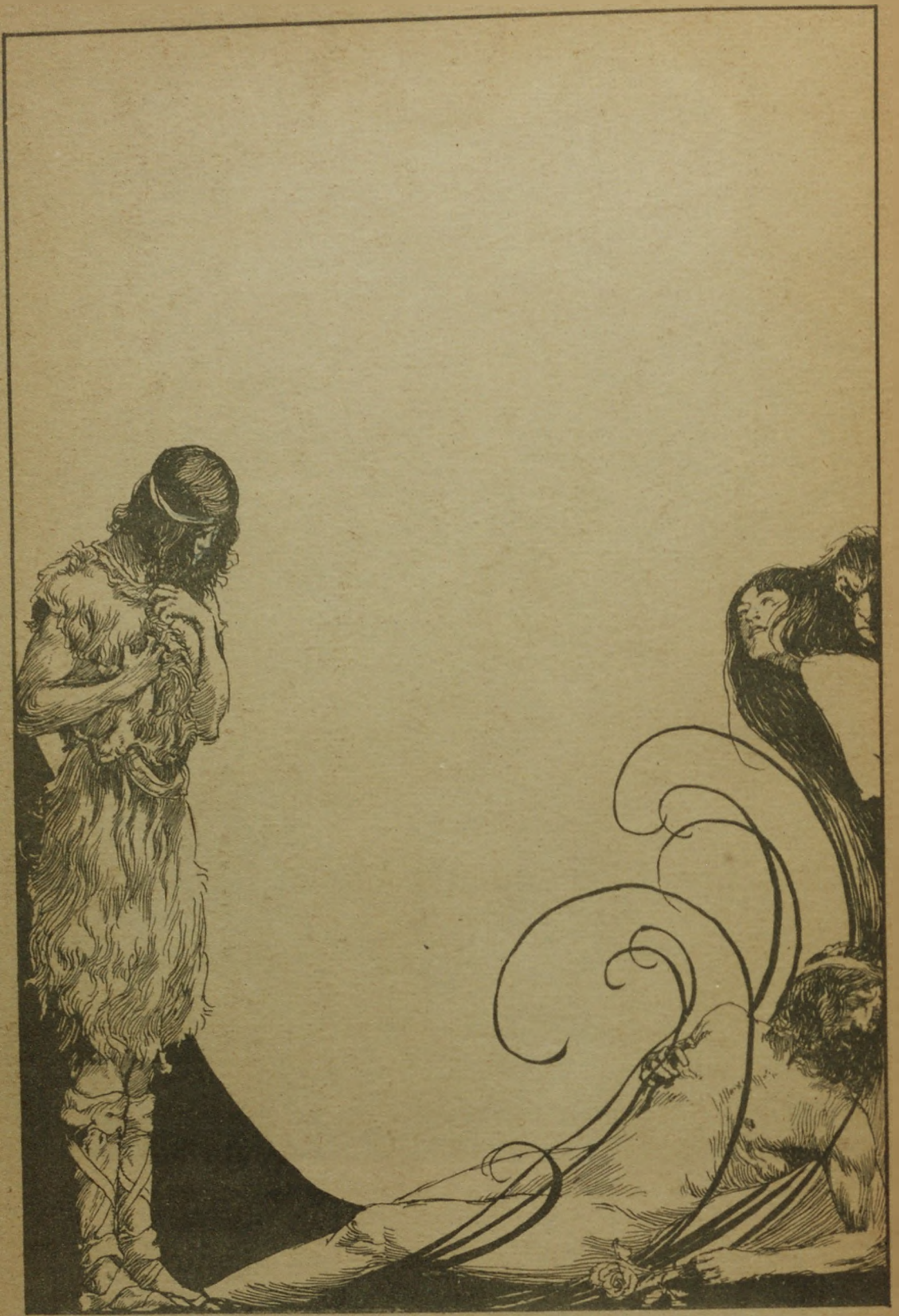




Parzival
or the Legend of the Holy Grail
retold from Ancient Sources
with acknowledgement to the
"Parzival" of Richard Wagner
By · C · W · Rolleston ·
Presented by Willy Pogány
· Harrap & Co London ·







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Introduction







The story of the Quest of the Cup and the Spear belongs, in its original form, to the oldest Aryan mythology. In Indian myth we find the Cup as a golden vessel from which wealth and fertility are poured out. It symbolizes the Sun; while the Spear is the lightning-weapon of the Sky-god, Indra, by whose means the sun is liberated from malign influences and the wholesome course of the seasons, which are supposed to have suffered some derangement, is restored.

Outlines or fragments of this nature-myth are clearly discernible in the legendary literature and folk-lore of Ireland, Wales and Brittany. But in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the tale took an entirely new form. The collocation of the Cup and the Spear suggested to some bard, probably a Breton, whose name we shall never know, a Christian and eucharistic significance; and the nature-myth became a mystical tale of sin, expiation, and redemption, which soon connected itself with the current Arthurian legends. These legends it coloured with its own strangeness and spirituality, and it helped them to take possession, as they did, of the heart and soul of Christendom. Some features of the ancient Aryan myth clung to the story in all the transformations, and developments which it underwent in the Middle Ages, particularly in

the conception of the Grail (derived from the Latin 'cratella', a cup or chalice) as an agent of vigour fertility, and life. The name of the hero, variously given as Parzival, Peredur, Peronnik, etc., appears to signify something like 'Champion of the Cup' (Celtic 'per', a cup or bowl).

The finest of the mediæval renderings of the legend is undoubtedly the long epic tale of 'Parzival' by Wolfram von Eschenbach written about the year 1200.



n this the present version is largely based, though episodes from Celtic sources have also been introduced, as well as some details from the drama of Richard Wagner.

Wolfram was the first writer to conceive the redemption of the Grail and its Order of Knighthood from the curse brought on them by sin, as due to a moral quality, not merely to magic or to force of arms. That moral quality was the pure, compassionate ardour of the champion, who at first fails to achieve the quest through a blind obedience, characteristic of the 'guileless fool', to the lessons he had been taught as to the external demeanour required of an aspirant to chivalry. He had yet to learn to separate the substance from the form of true Knighthood. Wagner follows Wolfram in this conception, but he introduces into the character and career of Parsifal an element of monkish asceticism which is foreign to Wolfram and to the oldest mediæval versions.

The present rendering follows the older sources in bringing into prominence not only the injunction laid on Parsifal to show no curiosity in a stranger's house, but also his mother's ironic advice to him to bestow a kiss on every fair lady whom he shall meet on his way. In the mediæval tales, however, the kiss is only a source of some trouble and embarrassment.

Here it has been made a cardinal episode in the story.

It reveals to Kundry, who is here made the recipient of it, a new type of man, and awakens in her a kind of love which she has never felt before; thus leading in the end to her self-sacrifice and redemption. For Parsifal it means the first dawning of a sense of the attraction and power of sex, and prepares him for the nobler revelation of it in the smile of Blaniid, which saves him in the hour of temptation when the kiss is returned by Kundry before Klingsor's palace.

The figure of Blaniid has no counterpart in the drama of Wagner, who admits no women into the Grail Castle—though in his earlier opera, *Lohengrin*, the hero is a son of Parsifal. Blaniid corresponds to the Condwiramour of Wolfram and the Blanche fleur of the *Conte del Graal* just in so far as she is the bride of Parsifal, but no further. She and her relations to the hero, are an invention of the present writer who in this and other respects has used the same

freedom in reshaping the details of the old legend as the mediæval writers, who often differ widely from each other, did not scruple to employ.

The manner of Kundry's death, and indeed her part in the story generally, are also peculiar to the present version. The supernatural mechanism by which Wagner makes her now a servant of the Grail, and now an instrument of Klingsor, did not seem adaptable to a narrative version, and is here reduced to an inward conflict between the human and the diabolic elements in her nature.

It is hoped that the inherent power and beauty of the saga, which, as a whole, has so rarely received any original treatment in English literature, may win acceptance for this latest rendering of the great theme. The writer has found it a very difficult task to compress into manageable compass, without omitting anything essential to an understanding of the plot, the immense luxuriance of the mediæval epic tale. But the art of Mr. Willy Pogány will supply many of his shortcomings, and the present work must be judged as what it is intended to be—an artistic whole, and not merely a poem with illustrations.

It only remains to offer the thanks of author and of publisher to Messrs. Schott & Co., of Regent St., the holders of Wagner's copyright, for the cordial permission which they have given for the use of certain material derived from Wagner's 'Parsifal'.

E. W. Rolleston

Part I. The Coming of the Grail.





*l*ittle while, O you who con this
rime,

*Stand at my side; and watch the
mist of Time*

*Part, for a little while, and give
to view*

*The red roofs of a town in old Anjou,
Clust'ring around a lofty rock and
steep,*

*Whereon with broad blind walls and
frowning Keep*

An ancient fortress towers.





ere once did reign
The good King Citurel, with his
sons twain,
The first named Gamuret, whose
lust of fight
Was never still'd— the next Amfortas
fight,
Of whom are wondrous tidings still
to say.





*The tale I tell is of an ancient
day,
Ere yet the sword of Charlemagne
set free
From lawless strife and heathen
savagery
That good land, mother of great
kings to come.
But lately from the dying hand of
Rome
Had fall'n the empire of the West:*





So poured
From North, from South, a count-
less heathen horde
Raging for blood and spoil, and
overthrew
Many a high throne, and many a
prince they slew,
Wasting the land; and here alone
the might
Of Citurel, the valiant pious knight,
Still held them off, though sore
bestead was he;
And round his walls they eddied
sullenly.







*On the high tower that yet his
banner bore
Behold the King, alone! The day
is o'er—
Of all the changing year that
holiest day
When erst upon the Hill of Golgotha
He hung upon the Cross, whose
shame and death
Fill'd with great glory and immortal
breath
The common clay of man.*





Above the King
His blazon'd banner on the winds
of Spring
Lifted and sank; nor did those
breezes bear
Sweet odours of the Springtime to
him there,
But bitter smoke from many a smould-
ering brand.
So Eifurel gazed across the rav-
aged land,
And thought upon his troop encamped
below,
Faithful to death, but sorely wasted
now—
The one slight shield that warded
yet from harm
That little world of tower and town
and farm.





hen lifting to the stars a face
that ne'er
He showed, except to heaven—so
like despair
Was the wild look upon his tor-
tured brow:

“O God”, he whispered, “we are lost,
if Thou

Send us no help in this extremity,
For past all hope of human aid are we.
Thy will be done; thy cup of mortal
pain

Shall we who bear Thy sign refuse
to drain?

But weak are we—scarce one un-
wounded knight

Followed my pennon from the last
great fight:

Lord, if Thou send no succour we
must die!”





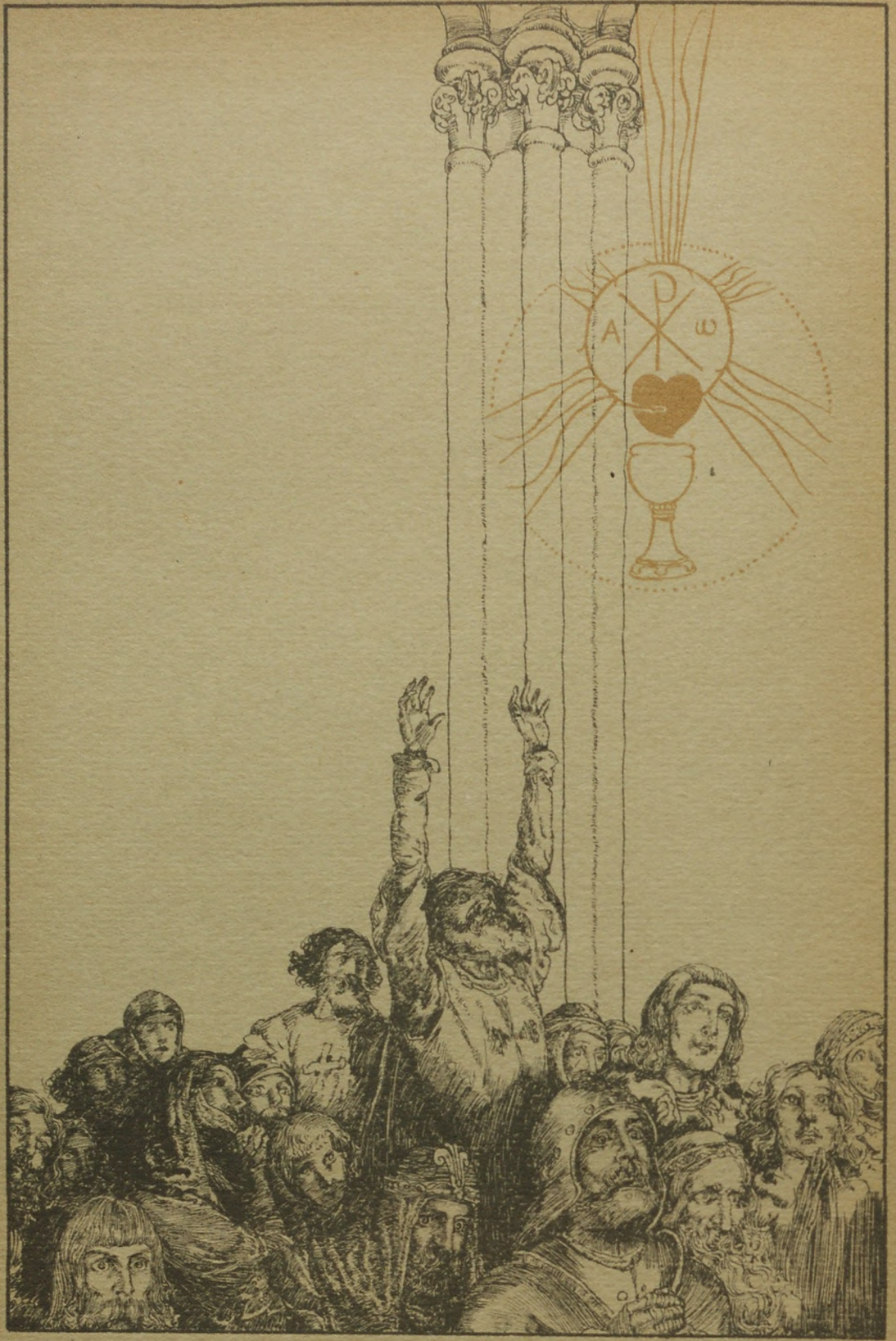
*Deep silence fell; the winds were
hush'd; the sky
Laughed with innumerable lights;
and awe
Crept about Citirel's heart, for
now he saw
One trembling Star begin to move
and grow
Expanding to a misty globe, that
slow
Descending, near and nearer, seem'd
to move
To swelling music, till the vault
above
Rang, all one rapturous cry. At
last it dwelt
On the stone parapet, whereby he
knelt
Dumb with amazement and a wild
suspense;
And then a flood of perfume struck
his sense
More sweet, him seemed, than ever
did beguile
The wanderer sailing by an Ind-
ian isle,*



*s from their throbbing heart of
silver light
The wreathing mists dissolved,
and gave to sight
A cup of crystal, great and
smooth and fair.
Radiant amid the dusk it rested
there;
And as he stared on it, in rosy flame
About its rim the shapes of letters
came
And vanish'd; but he read them as
they glow'd:
"I am that Grail which held the
Blood that flow'd
For man's redemption on the bit-
ter Tree,
And where I am are strength and
victory."*









Judge now if words of mortal breath
 may tell
What wrought within the breast
 of Eiturel!
What humble tears he shed, what
 joy undream'd
Flooded his heart! The night wore on;
 there gleam'd
A flush of gold above the eastern
 wood;
But ere the sun was fully ris'n, there
 stood
That holy thing enshrined reverently
Within the castle chapel; where to see,
To praise, and to adore, came flock-
 ing they
Who held themselves but dead men
 yesterday;
But now before the Grail seem'd
 every Knight
Fairer and nobler in his fellows'
 sight,
And all grew giant-hearted with
 their lord.






And now the Grail with many a
flaming word
Caught them from day to day
what should be done
Till all its hidden potencies they
had won.
For sick and wounded men before
it laid
Grew whole and strong, and common
wheaten bread
Offered before it changed to flesh
and wine
For each man as he would; and when
the sign
For battle blazed upon its margin,
then
Each knight rode mighty with the
strength of ten:
And bursting on the heathen hosts,
they slew
And scattered far and wide that law-
less crew—





Till once again the homely life
of man
In that fair province its old course
began.
Safe by the cottage door the maids
could spin;
Safely the hind could plough, and
hope to win
A bounteous harvest, with three
mighty friends
Earth, Sun and Rain to help his
honest ends;
And safely to the market once again
The great white oxen drew the
heaped-up wain.





*But not accomplished yet was all
th' intent
Of this great sending; for there
came and went
Still many a flaming message of
the Grail,
And still they wrought its bidding
without fail;
While two pure maidens watch'd it
night and day
Noting with care each thing that
it would say.
And first the long-forgotten tale it
told
How Arimathaeon Joseph, who of old
Had laid the Saviour in his rock-
hewn tomb,
After long wandering, had found
his home
Near to this spot;*





And so they search'd, until
Upon the east slope of a sun-
kissed hill
They found a ruin'd shrine, all
overgrown
With grass and weeds, wherein a
great flagstone
Among the meadowsweet and fox-
gloves lay.
This with much toil and heed they
moved away,
And found the white bones of that
Saint. And there,
Wonder of wonders, was an iron spear,
And on its blade, wet blood. This
was that lance,
So ran the utterance of the Grail,
which once
The Roman soldier bore, who pierced
the Side
Whence flowed for love of man that
mystic tide;
And Eirel bore it homeward
reverently.







*But stranger things their eyes were
still to see,
And in new fields new victories
to be won.
For Citurel next must leave to
his strong son,
His eldest, Gamuret, his burg and
lands,
Whilst young Amfortas with his
father wends
And twenty chosen knights into the
woods.
Long, long they rode 'mid trackless
solitudes
Till by a lake, with ancient oaks
ringed round,
A stately castle, newly built, they
found.*





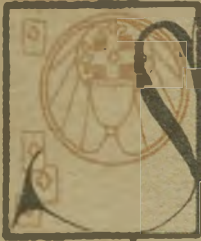
bove its gate in graven stone
was set
A Cup, with rays of light sur-
rounding it.
On a broad banner blowing
overhead
The same device glitter'd in gold
and red.
None hailed them from the walls - in
fear and doubt
Long time they search'd that mystery
about,
But found not in the woods one living
thing.





*t length they pluck'd up heart,
and entering
Across the bridge their trampling
horse-hoofs rang,
Nor did the iron-harr'd port-
cullis clang
To bid them halt - no men-at-arms
they saw,
But all the court was vacant. So
in awe
They paced long corridors and echoing
halls,
Saw silken tapestries upon the walls,
And carven pillars - all things fair
and meet,
As though some dreaming king in
this retreat
Had plann'd to build the lordliest
home on earth,
But lit no fire upon the lonely hearth,
And left all empty to the wandering
wind.*





So here the good king knew the
place assign'd
To be the Grail's high court and
sanctuary.
And here they dwelt, that chosen
company,
Sacred, mysterious, unapproachable.
For all the forest ways were guarded
well
By wildering enchantments, so that
none
Could force his way to them, save
he alone
Whom the Grail summon'd to its
service high.
Pure must he be of heart, in chivalry
Well-nurtured, and on fire with ar-
dour great
To help the wronged, and set the
crooked straight.
And suchlike men were gather'd one
by one
From every Christian land beneath
the sun,
As came to each the high mysterious
call.









*hither he travell'd then, forsaking
all,
Home, friends, possessions, wom-
an's love - so bade
The heavenly script, for only he
might wed
Who ruled the Castle of the Grail,
that so
From sire to son the line of Kings
might go.
Thence on the mission of the Grail
sped forth
Those dedicated Knights thro' all
the earth:
Unknown at many a martyr's side
they stood,
O'er many a lonely deathbed held
the Rood;
Or, sheath'd in steel and angry for
the right,
They turned the tide of some dis-
astrous fight;*





*r oftentimes if hapless child or
maid
Cried in great anguish for im-
mortal aid
There stood to succour them a
Shining One—
And ere the thanks were utter'd, he
was gone.*



Part II. The Calling of Parsifal.





*I*t was a summer noonday when
there stood
By a low sheiling near an ancient
wood
A woman, tall and stately, but
arrayed
In homely garb, as though a queen
had strayed
From her high bower with common
folk to dwell.
Grey-haired she was, with lined
brow, and well
In her deep eyes and in the weary
strain
Of close-shut lips, you mark'd the
signs which pain
And bitterness of heart had painted
there.
Beside her was a lad of twenty; fair
And mighty-thewed he was, with
eager eyes
That stared like hers, but rapt with
glad surprise,
As from the forest-gloom came into
sight
Three horsemen, riding slowly, each
a knight
In war-array.

B

*eneath the high sun's rays,
That made from helm to spur a
dancing blaze,
They rode across an open glade,
and then*

*In the dark forest disappear'd again.
Breathless, amaz'd, with wet blue
eyes and wide,*

*"Mother, hast thou beheld?", the
young man cried:*

"O tell me, what be these?"





She turned her head,
And in her eyes 'twas little joy
he read,
But fear and hatred rather, as
she said
"Angels, my son". "I go", he cried,
"to be
An angel with them", and then
suddenly
Fleet as a hawk, he darted on their
track.





*he day wore on, and still he came
not back.*

*But late at even, when she sat
and span*

*Beside her log-fire, with one aged
man,*

*Her seneschal when she was rich
and great,*

*Now friend and guardian in her poor
estate,*

*The low door darken'd, and the lad
came in.*

*"O Parsifal", she cried, "where hast
thou been?"*

*And as she strained him to her breast,
he said*

*"Mother, I scarce can tell thee how
I sped.*

*Listen: no angels are these goodly men,
But knights of Arthur's court, — so
said they;*





Then
'What is a knight?', I ask'd, where=
at they smiled,
While one of them with lordly eyes
and mild
-Lancelot, they called him - look'd
me o'er and o'er,
Then lighted down, and each thing
that he wore,
-His lance, his sword - he show'd,
and let me feel
-O joy! - the rough hilt of the long
grey steel;
And told me all the usage of each
thing.
And now in service of their mighty
king
They rode, he said, to war on evil men.





*And, mother, see what I have
wrought!"*

*With that he seiz'd her by the
hand, and brought,*

*The old man following, to a pad-
dock, where*

*They housed at night-time the old
piebald mare*

*That drew the wood-cart; and the
lad had framed*

*From twisted withes and sacking
what he named*

A tilting-saddle for that sorry nag.

A shield of wicker dangled on a peg,

*And from a holly-free, pointed and
charred,*

*A long spear he had fashion'd; and
'twere hard*

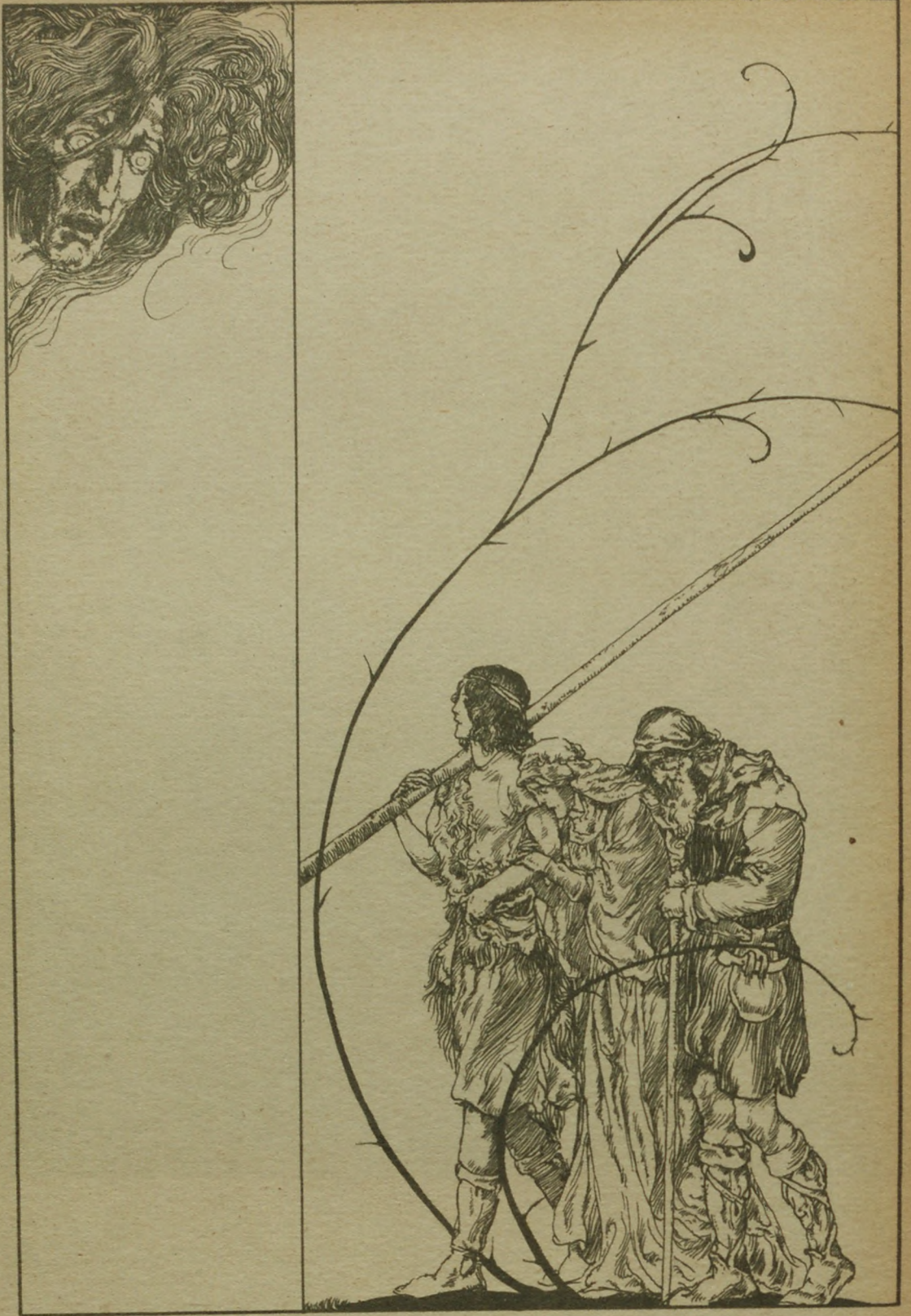
*For a strong man to lift that weapon
rude,*

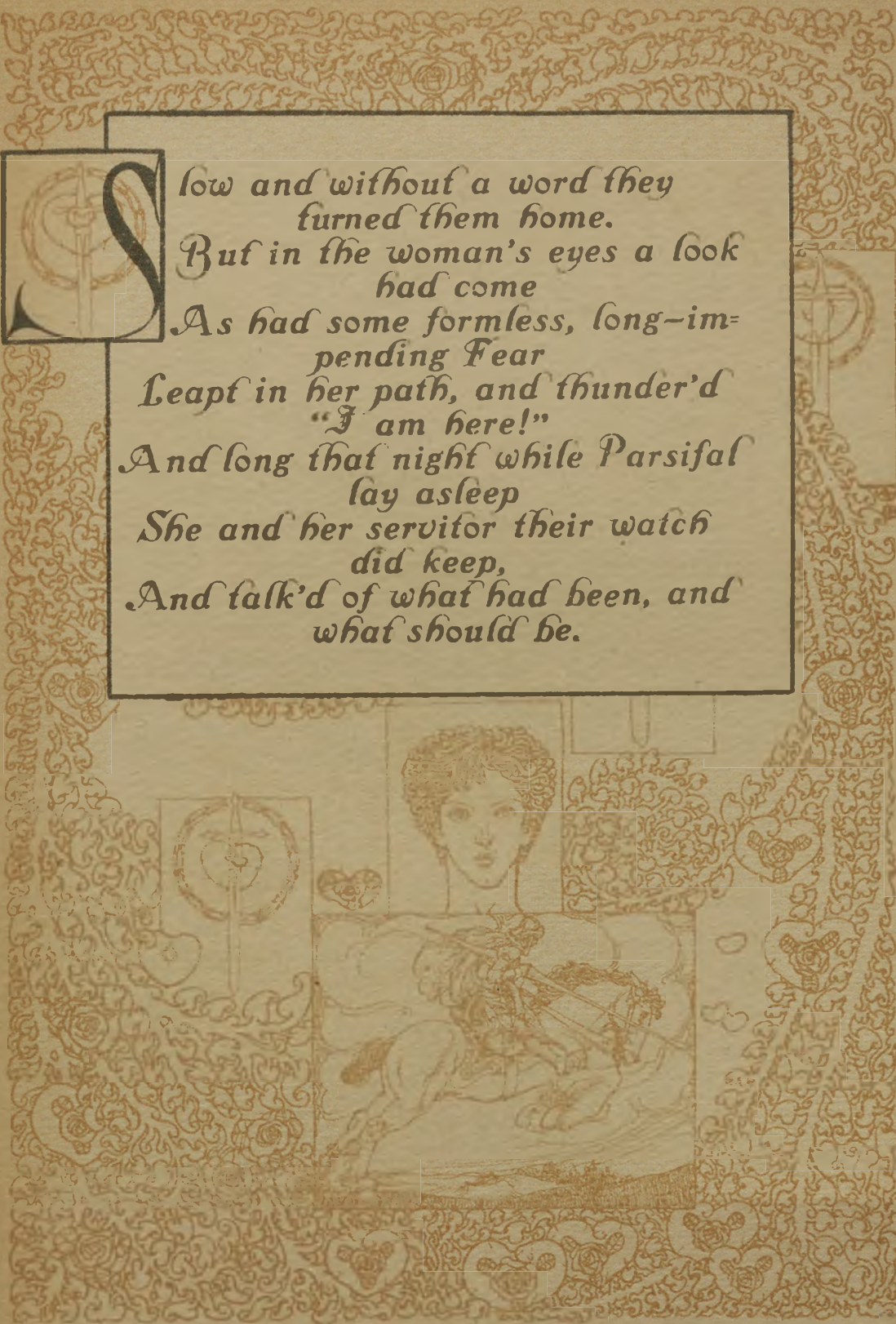
*But Parsifal swung it in his joyous
mood*

*As 'twere a branch of rose or
eglantine*

*Swayed by a maiden in her fingers
fine.*







Slow and without a word they
turned them home.
But in the woman's eyes a look
had come
As had some formless, long-im-
pending Fear
Leapt in her path, and thunder'd
"I am here!"
And long that night while Parsifal
lay asleep
She and her servitor their watch
did keep,
And talk'd of what had been, and
what should be.





But when the morning broke, and
gloriously
About the forest ways in pools
of light
The sunshine flickered, said that
aged knight
To Parsifal, expectant—"O my son,
That which hath chanced can never
be undone.
Fain had thy mother to this narrow
plot
Bound in eventless happiness thy lot.
But Powers more strong than we
are have unfurled
The flag that thou must follow
through the world.







Go forth! And if thou would'st be
such a knight
As those thou saw'st ride by in
armour bright,
Then mark the rede I give, for
even I

Was long ago of that fair company:
Gentle be thou to all thou dost surpass
In strength or wealth – but in the
narrow pass
Rough with thy foeman; keep thy
plighted word;
Seek for no strife, but never sheathe
thy sword,
Once drawn, till victory be thine,
or death;
Stand by weak Right until thy
latest breath;
Speak not too much, and question
not at all
If aught of strange or grievous
should befall
In any house where thou may'st be
a guest;





To women all be courteous, but
'twere best
Until thou meet thy heart's true
love, to deem
That what they are in sooth, and
what they seem,
Are twain" . . . Then cried his
mother bitterly
"This also is the way of chivalry,
If aught I know of it — that each
fair dame
Thou chance to meet upon thy road
to fame,
Thou kiss her lips. . . O son of mine,
even so
As Gamuret went, thy sire, wilt
thou too go?
Six brothers had'st thou — on the
same wild way
They all rode forth to storm their
lives away.
Fierce lovers and fierce haters,
you might chain
The maddest wind that sweeps the
Northern Main
Rather than curb the will of one of
these.





Go then; and what of joys or mi-
series
Thou meet upon the broad wave
of the world,
And whereso'er upon its surges
hurled,
Let this thought shine before thee
like a star —
That thou be not as winds and
waters are,
Vehement, restless, uncontrollable;
But know thy path in life, and heed
it well.
— But what avails it? Thou wilt
surely be
Even as God made thee, and I
dimly see
That I have saved thee from the
world till now
Not for myself, as fondly I did trow,
But for God's need of some pure
strength like thine.
Somewhere, somehow, to work the
Will divine.





And though I ne'er may see thy
face again
I deem I have not borne thee
all in vain,
Nor vainly in this solitude uncouth
For twenty years have woven about
thy youth
The web of deep seclusion, rent
today.
Tears choked her voice – the gold
head and the grey
Mingled their locks, and in a long
embrace
They held each other, in that quiet
place
Which one of them should see in life
no more.





*Then Parsifal kiss'd the old knight's
hands, and sore
At heart, with his first grief, but
all athrill,
For in that aching heart there
sounded still
Wild music, calling from the world
unknown,
He mounted his rough steed, and
forth, alone,
Into the shadowy wood he took his
way;
And all the glory of the summer day
Went to grey twilight for that aged
pair
With the last glimmer of his golden
hair.*







Part III Kundry.







B

eneath a May tree heaped with
snowy bloom,
Just where a white road runs
into the gloom
Of a great forest, lo, a woman!
stayed

As though to shelter in the fragrant
shade

While burns the noonday sun. Her
rich array

And dark, disdainful beauty seem
to say

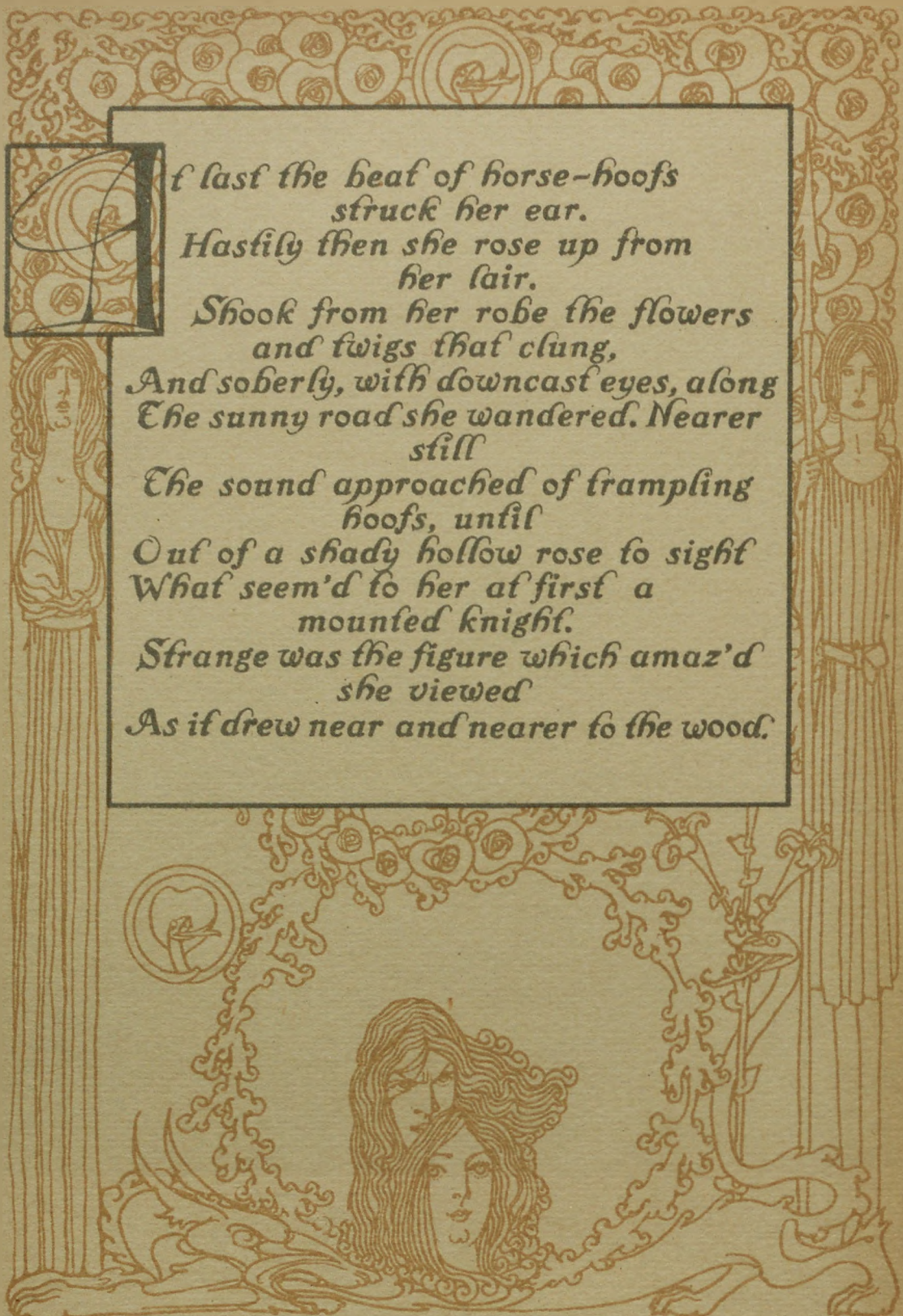
That as befits a dame of high degree
By page and squire she should
attended be.

Yet all alone she lingers there; and now
She peers along the road with
shaded brow,

And now, returning, in the shade
she lies

With outflung limbs and wide, im-
patient eyes.





At last the beat of horse-hoofs
struck her ear.
Hastily then she rose up from
her lair.
Shook from her robe the flowers
and twigs that clung,
And soberly, with downcast eyes, along
The sunny road she wandered. Nearer
still
The sound approached of trampling
hoofs, until
Out of a shady hollow rose to sight
What seem'd to her at first a
mounted knight.
Strange was the figure which amaz'd
she viewed
As if drew near and nearer to the wood.



F

or arms he bore a crossbow on
his back,

And a thick holly stake with
point burnt black

Above his shoulder sloped. No
sword he bore—

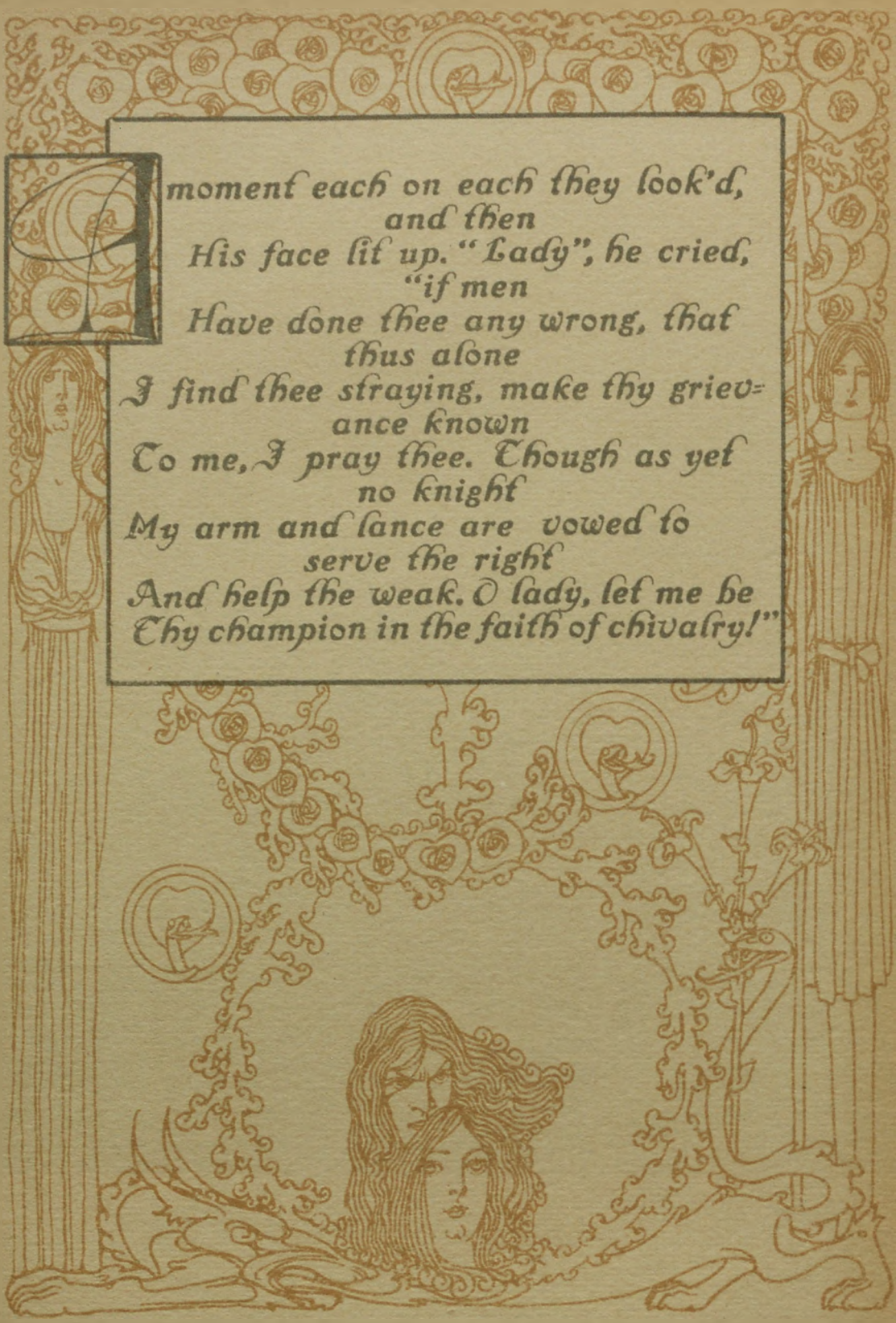
His golden hair was all the helm
he wore;

A piebald horse he rode, that wearily
Dragged its stiff limbs along, and
seem'd to be


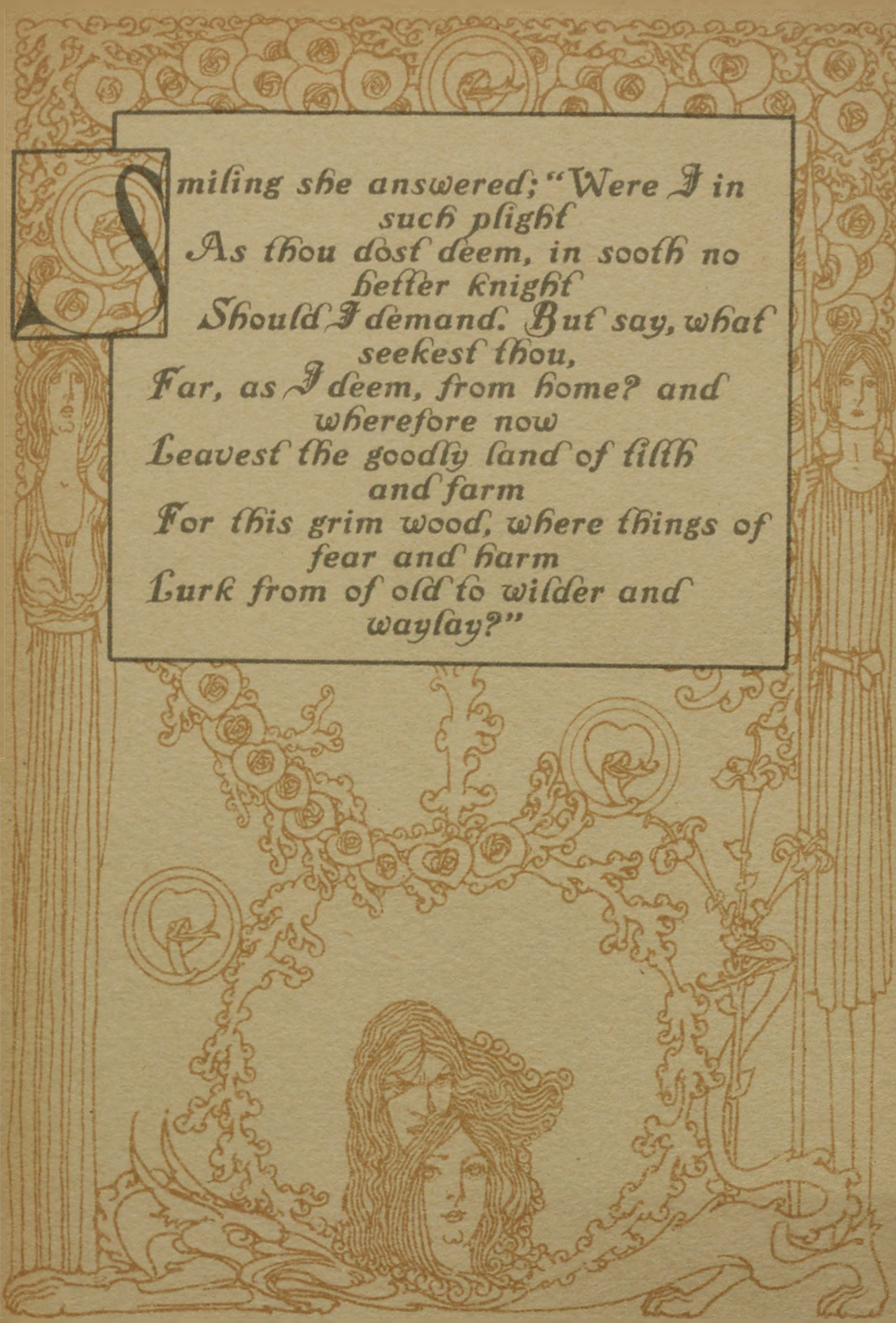
For war or tournament but little meet.
Yet he that rode thereon was stark
and straight

As a young oak tree, and his fear-
less eyes


Met her dark glance in fair and
knightly wise.

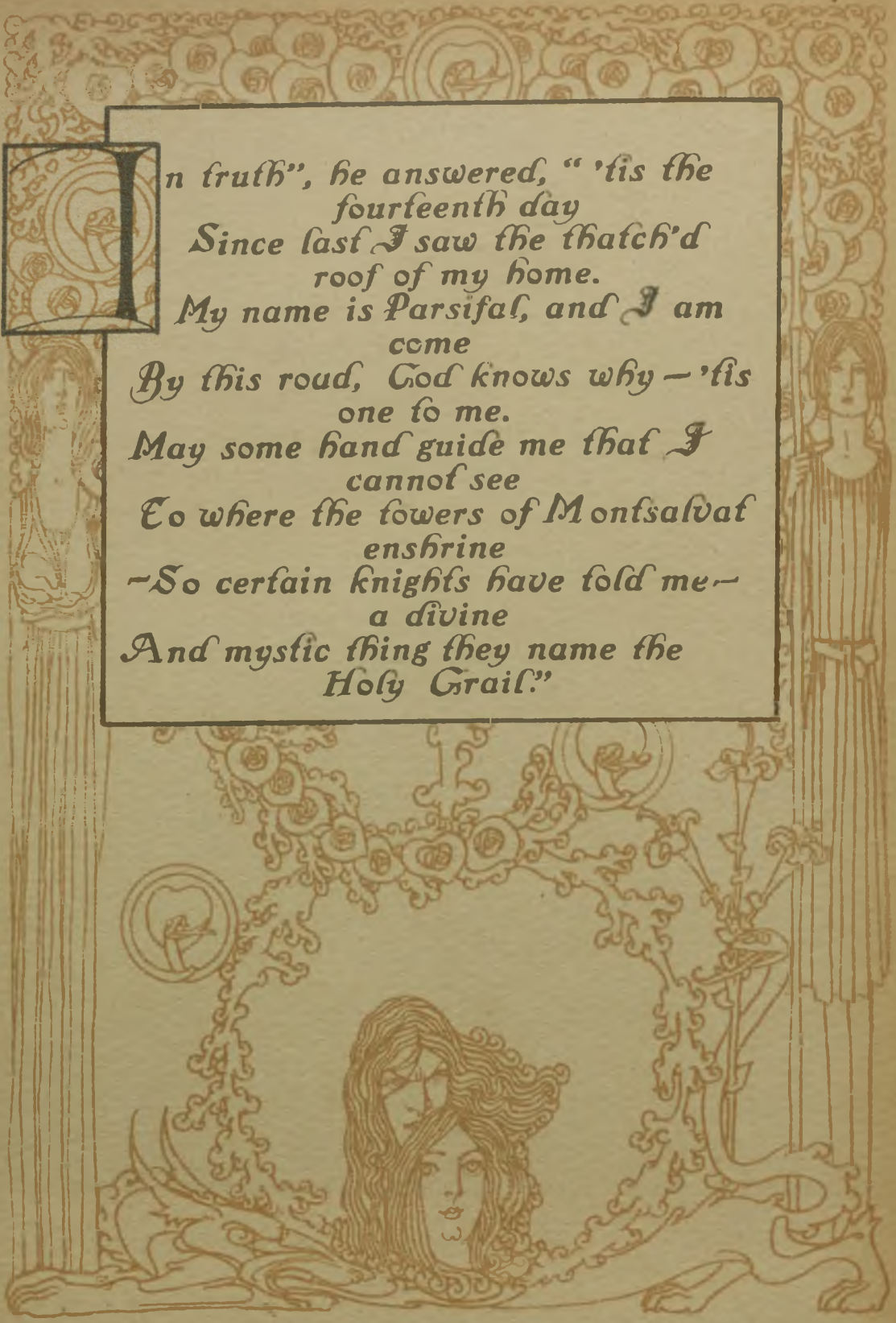


A moment each on each they look'd,
and then
His face lit up. "Lady", he cried,
"if men
Have done thee any wrong, that
thus alone
I find thee straying, make thy griev-
ance known
To me, I pray thee. Though as yet
no knight
My arm and lance are vowed to
serve the right
And help the weak. O lady, let me be
Thy champion in the faith of chivalry!"



*Smiling she answered; "Were I in
such plight
As thou dost deem, in sooth no
better knight
Should I demand. But say, what
seekest thou,
Far, as I deem, from home? and
wherefore now
Leavest the goodly land of tilth
and farm
For this grim wood, where things of
fear and harm
Lurk from of old to wilder and
waylay?"*

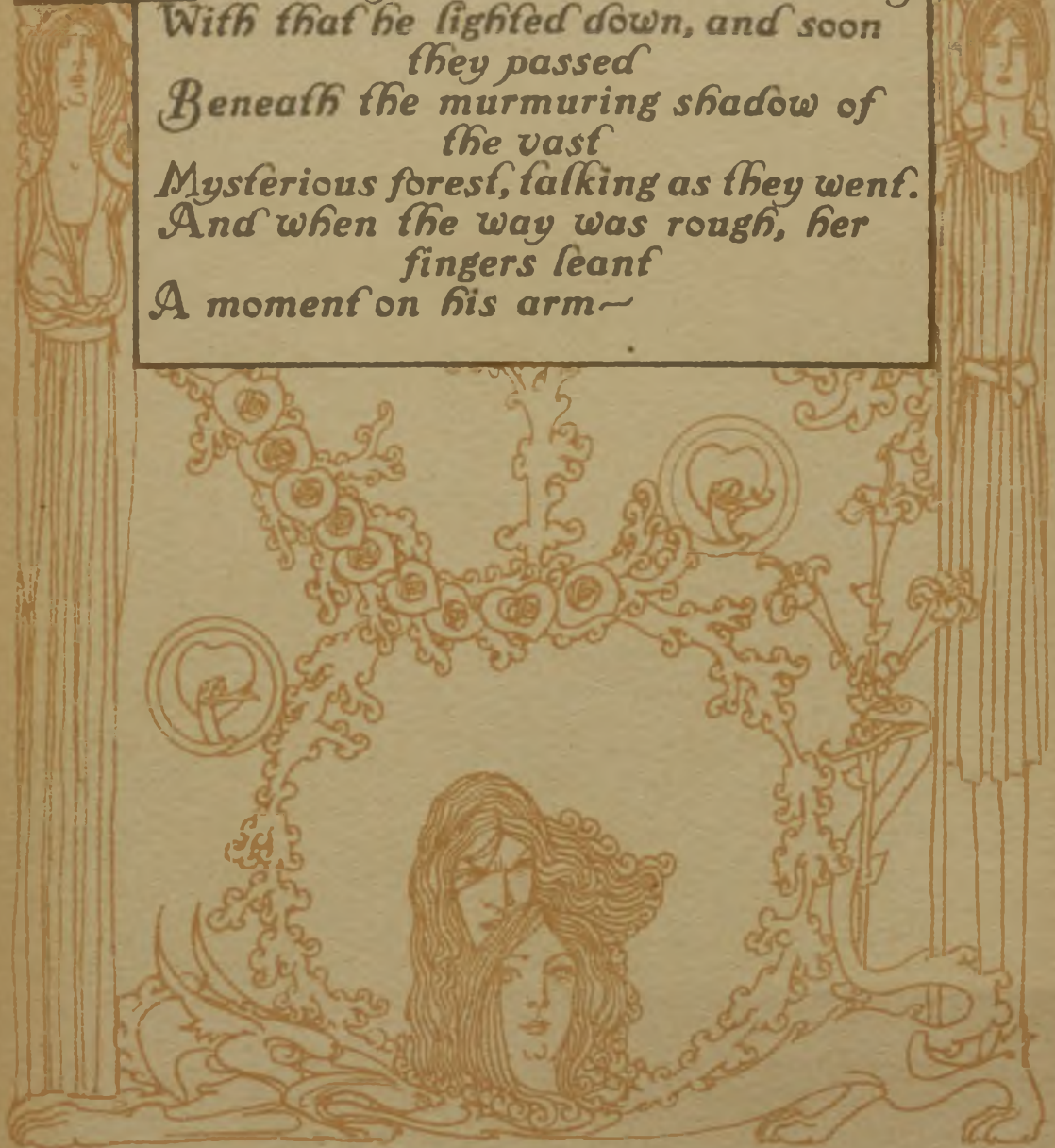




In truth", he answered, "'tis the
fourteenth day
Since last I saw the thatch'd
roof of my home.
My name is Parsifal, and I am
come
By this roud, God knows why — 'tis
one to me.
May some hand guide me that I
cannot see
To where the towers of Montsalvat
enshrine
— So certain knights have told me —
a divine
And mystic thing they name the
Holy Grail."

W

ell me!" she cried, "I deem thou
will not fail;
For in these woods none better
knows than I
The way to that inviolate sanctuary.
With that he lighted down, and soon
they passed
Beneath the murmuring shadow of
the vast
Mysterious forest, talking as they went.
And when the way was rough, her
fingers leant
A moment on his arm—



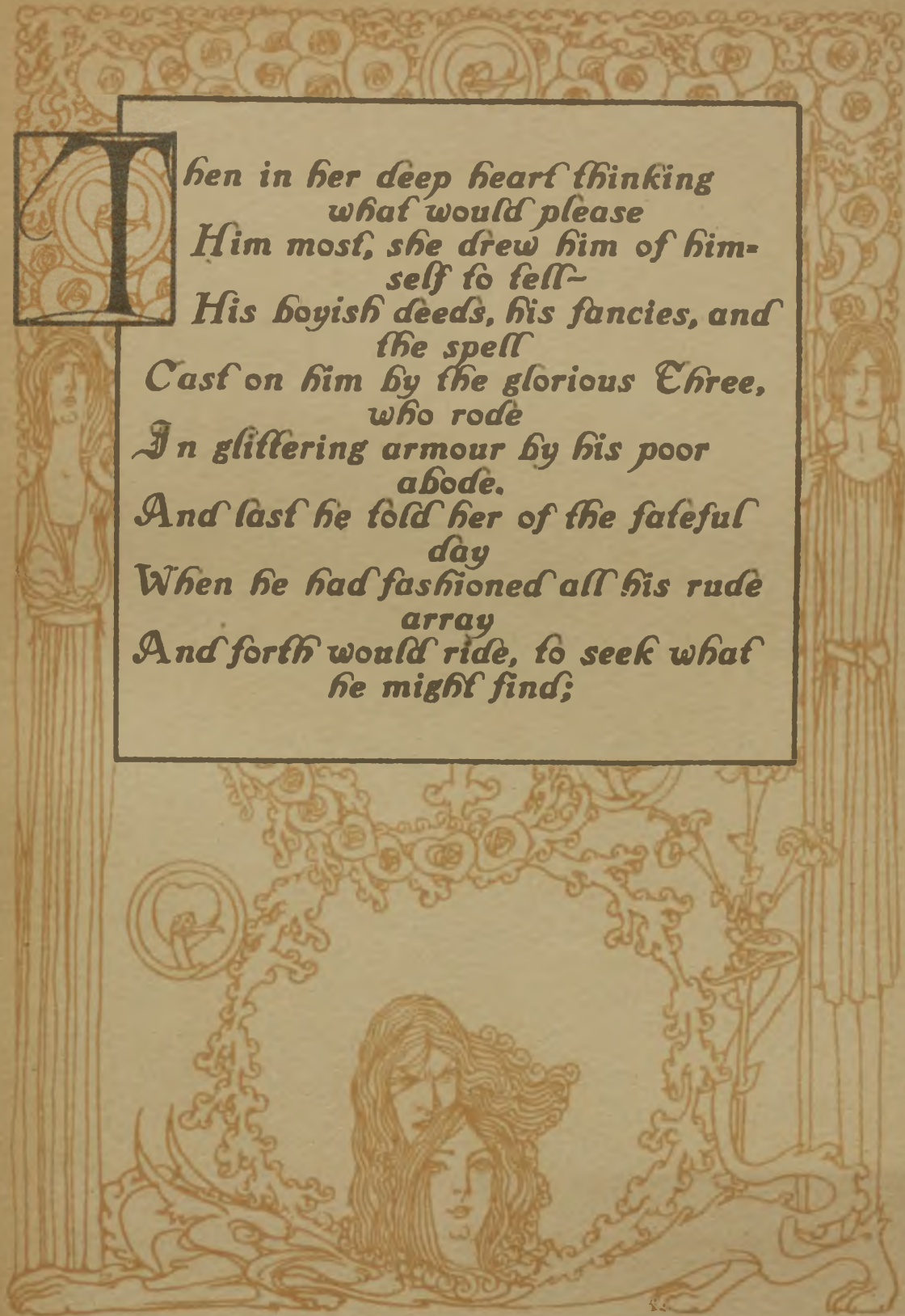


*And now she drew
Her robe's hem higher from the
scarlet shoe
Than she had need: a tender,
mocking tone
Made music in her voice, her dark
eyes shone
With promises unspoken when she
met
The light of his, that all uncon-
scious yet
Gleam'd like the laughing blue of
summer seas.*



T

hen in her deep heart thinking
what would please
Him most, she drew him of him-
self to tell-
His boyish deeds, his fancies, and
the spell
Cast on him by the glorious Three,
who rode
In glittering armour by his poor
abode.
And last he told her of the fateful
day
When he had fashioned all his rude
array
And forth would ride, to seek what
he might find;



W

hen suddenly there flash'd into
his mind

His mother's wayward-bitter
speech: "and see

Thou kiss upon the lips each
fair lady

That thou shalt meet!", and crying,
"I forgot

The ways of chivalry! believe me, not
My will it was to leave one rite un-
done."

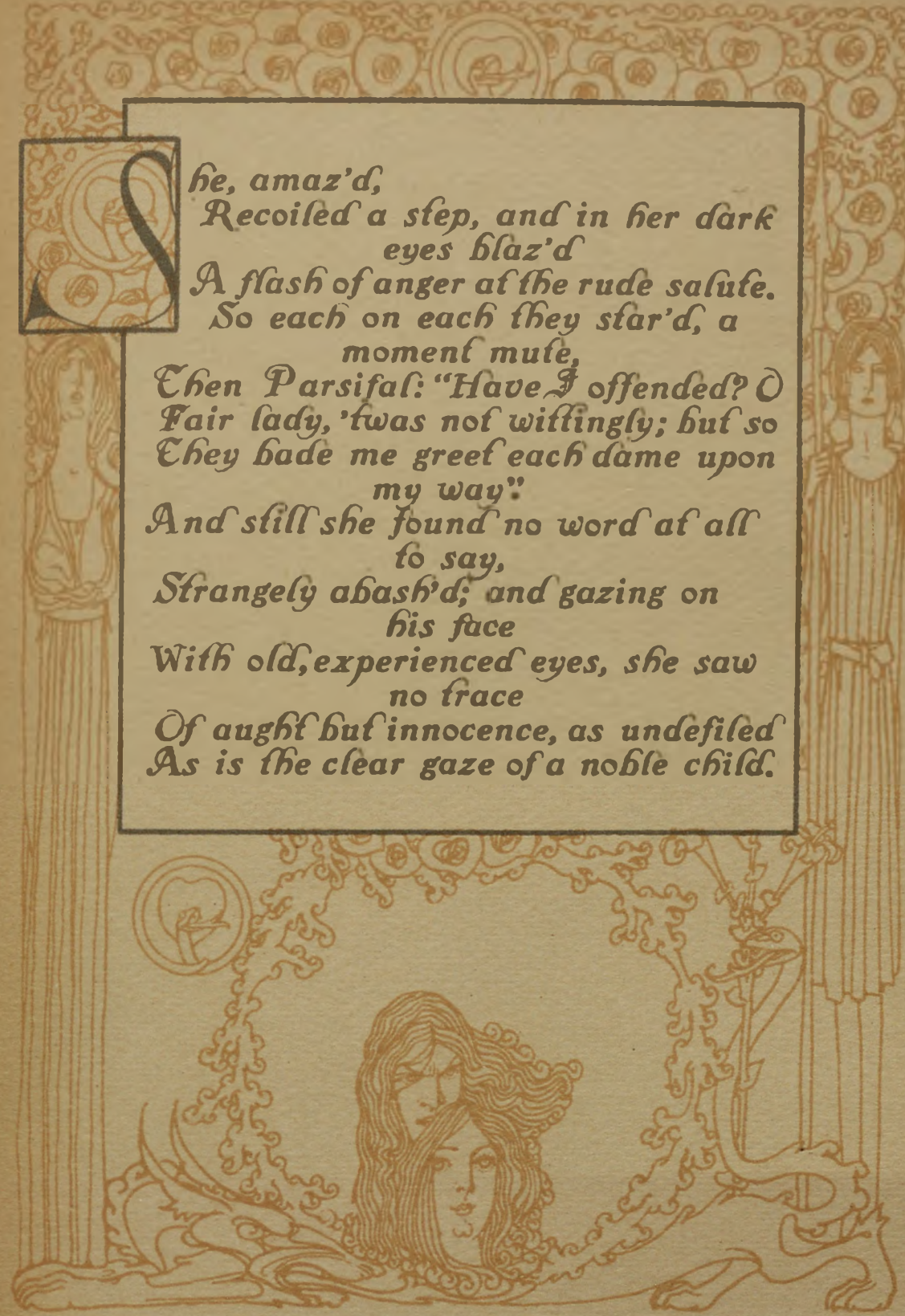
Then bow'd his head, and ere she
wist, upon

Her scarlet lips he kiss'd her.





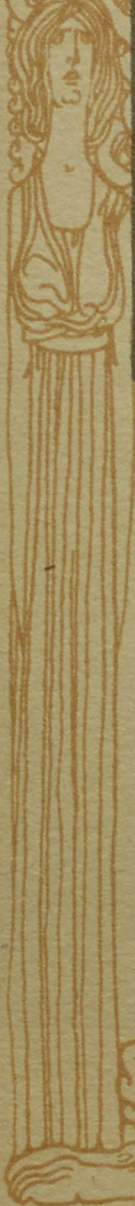




She, amaz'd,
Recoiled a step, and in her dark
eyes blaz'd
A flash of anger at the rude salute.
So each on each they star'd, a
moment mute,
Then Parsifal: "Have I offended? O
Fair lady, 'twas not wittingly; but so
They bade me greet each dame upon
my way!"
And still she found no word at all
to say,
Strangely abash'd; and gazing on
his face
With old, experienced eyes, she saw
no trace
Of aught but innocence, as undefiled
As is the clear gaze of a noble child.



And then a sudden passion without
name
Seiz'd her, half fear and half a
whelming shame,
And with a wordless cry she turn'd
and fled
Into the forest gloom. Bewilderèd
Stood Parsifal, with thoughts all
unexpressed
And dim surmises surging in his
breast.
Then slowly turn'd him to his path
again.





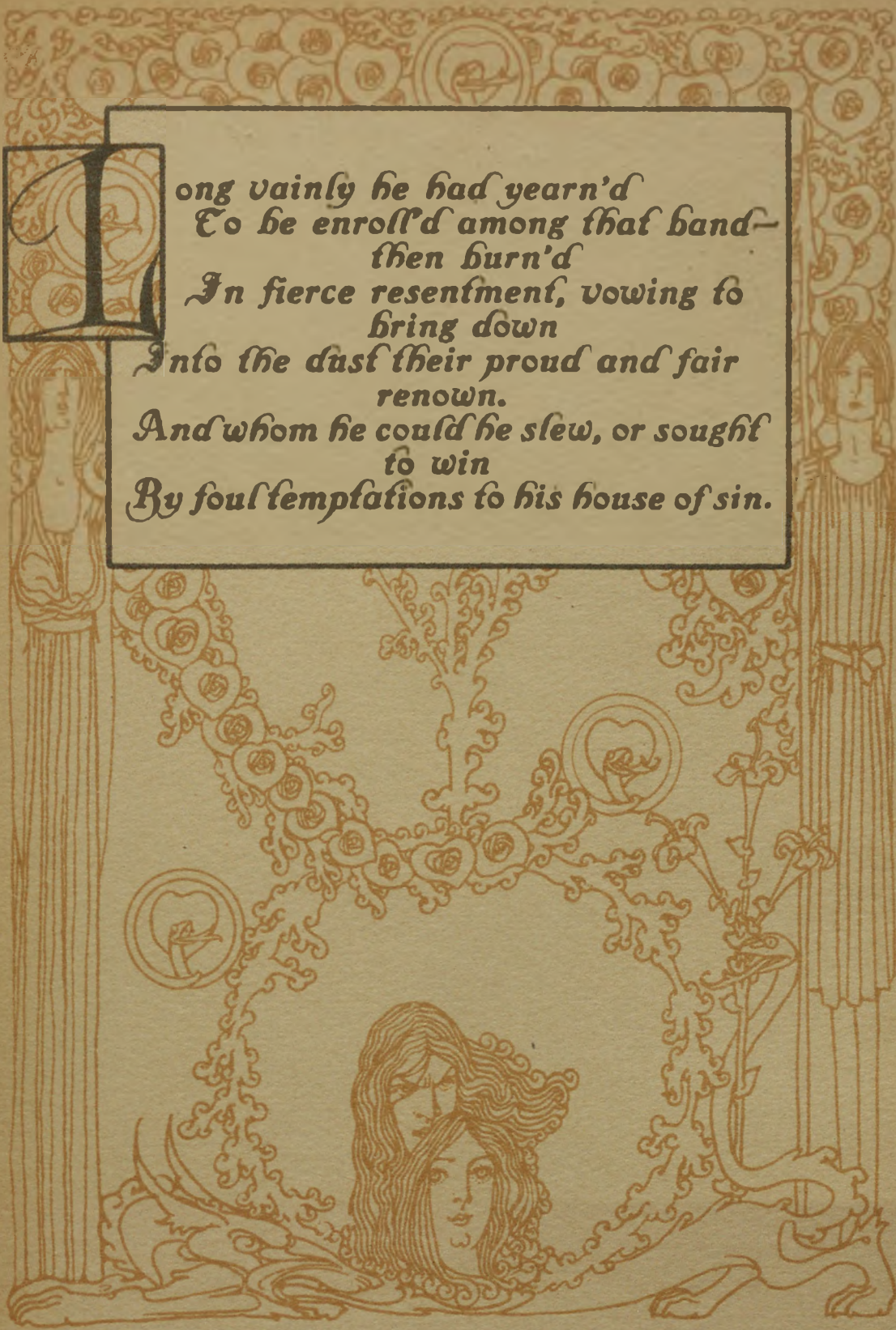


*In those grim mountains which the
land of Spain
Rears as her bulwark to the north,
there stands
A wondrous palace, never built
with hands,
But in its wilderness of sun-baked
stone,
Ring'd with vast precipices, it has
grown
In wild magnificence of dome and
tower
By wizard spells of dread, unearthly
power.
Klingsor, the great enchanter, to assail
The holy brethren, warders of the
Grail,
Had rear'd it there.*



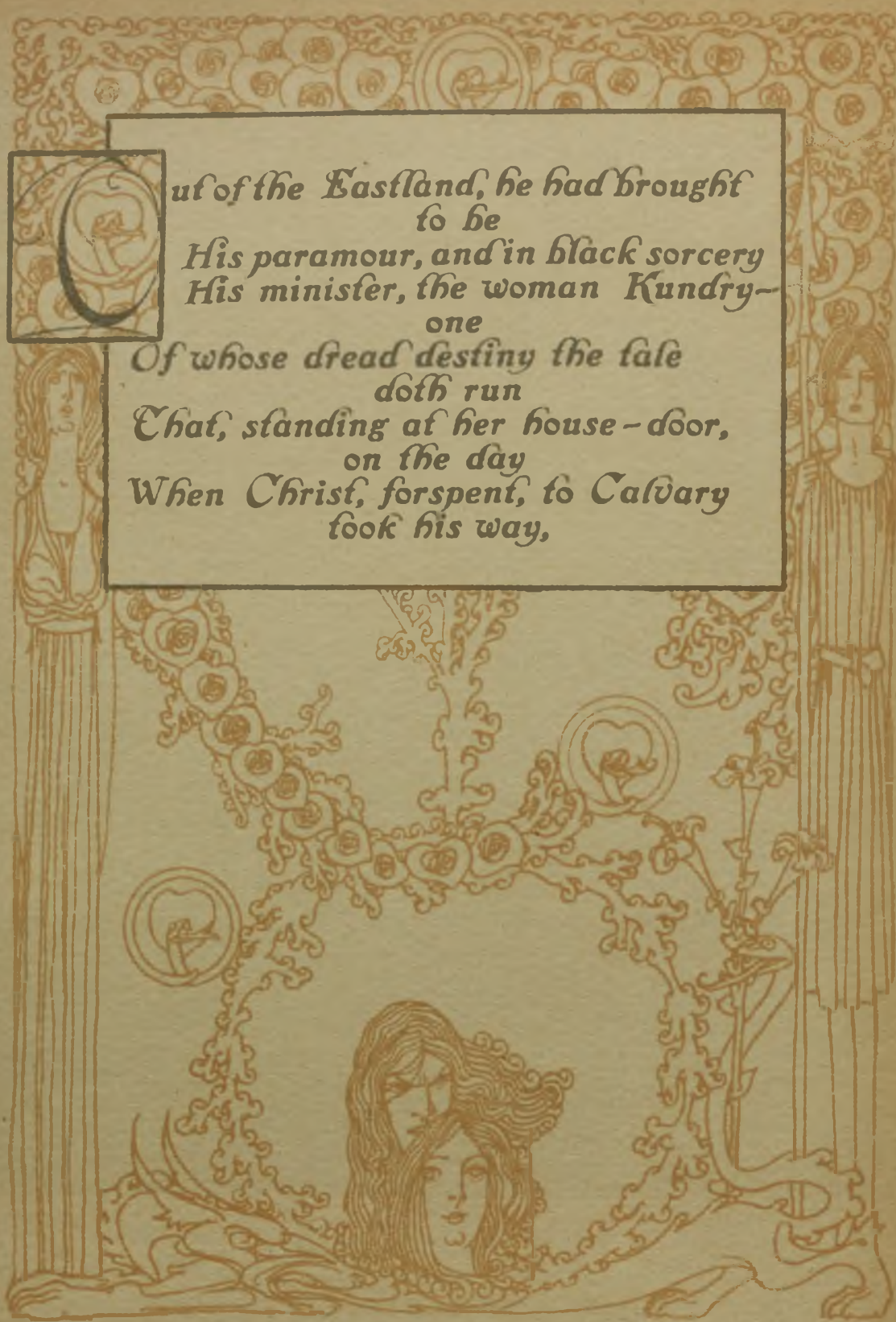






Long vainly he had yearn'd
To be enroll'd among that band—
then burn'd
In fierce resentment, vowing to
bring down
Into the dust their proud and fair
renown.
And whom he could he slew, or sought
to win
By foul temptations to his house of sin.

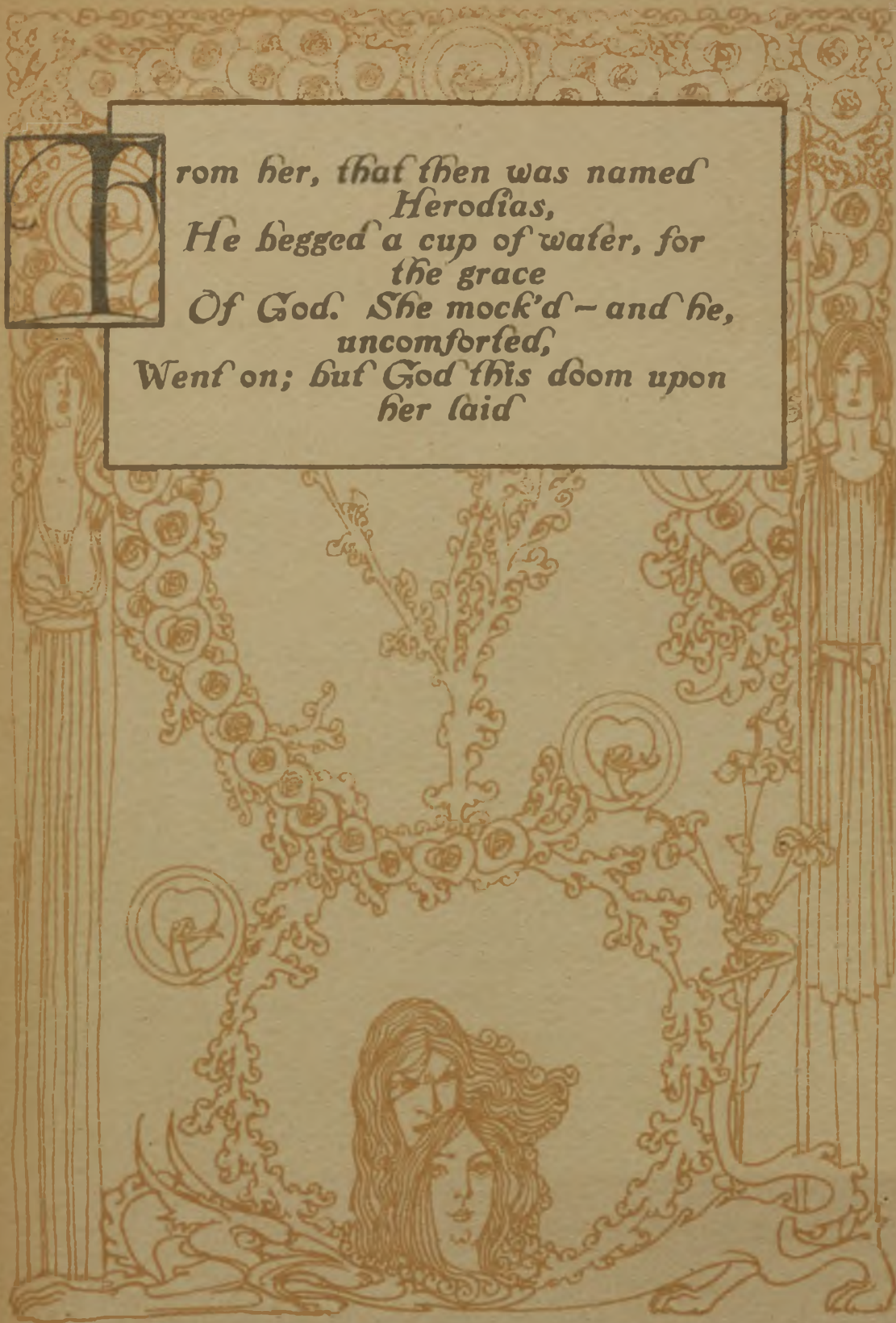



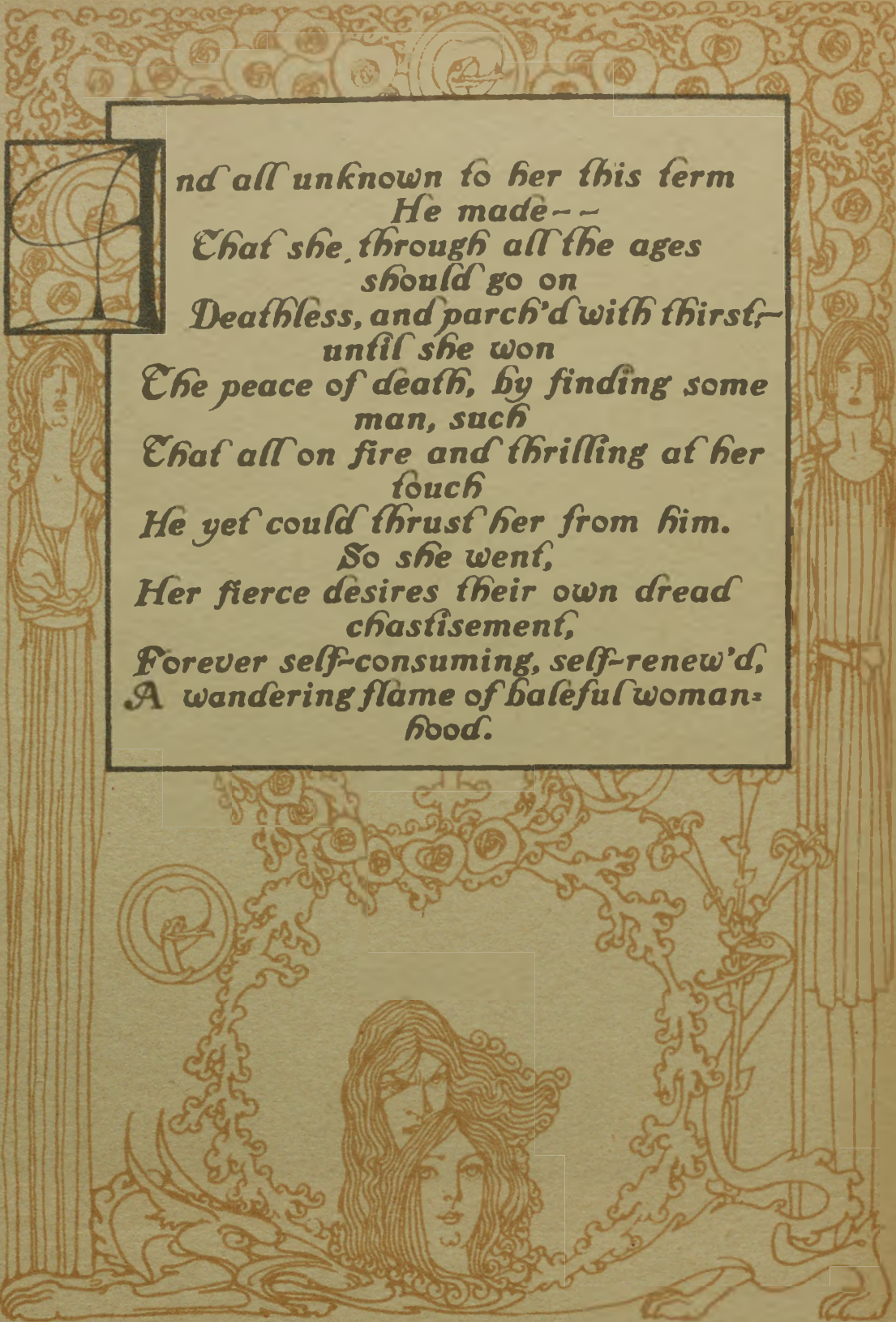


Out of the Eastland, he had brought
to be
His paramour, and in black sorcery
His minister, the woman Kundry—
one


Of whose dread destiny the tale
doth run
That, standing at her house-door,
on the day
When Christ, forspent, to Calvary
took his way,

From her, that then was named
Herodias,
He begged a cup of water, for
the grace
Of God. She mock'd - and he,
uncomforted,
Went on; but God this doom upon
her laid





nd all unknown to her this term
He made--
That she, through all the ages
should go on
Deathless, and parch'd with thirst,
until she won
The peace of death, by finding some
man, such
That all on fire and thrilling at her
touch
He yet could thrust her from him.
So she went,
Her fierce desires their own dread
chastisement,
Forever self-consuming, self-renew'd,
A wandering flame of baleful woman-
hood.







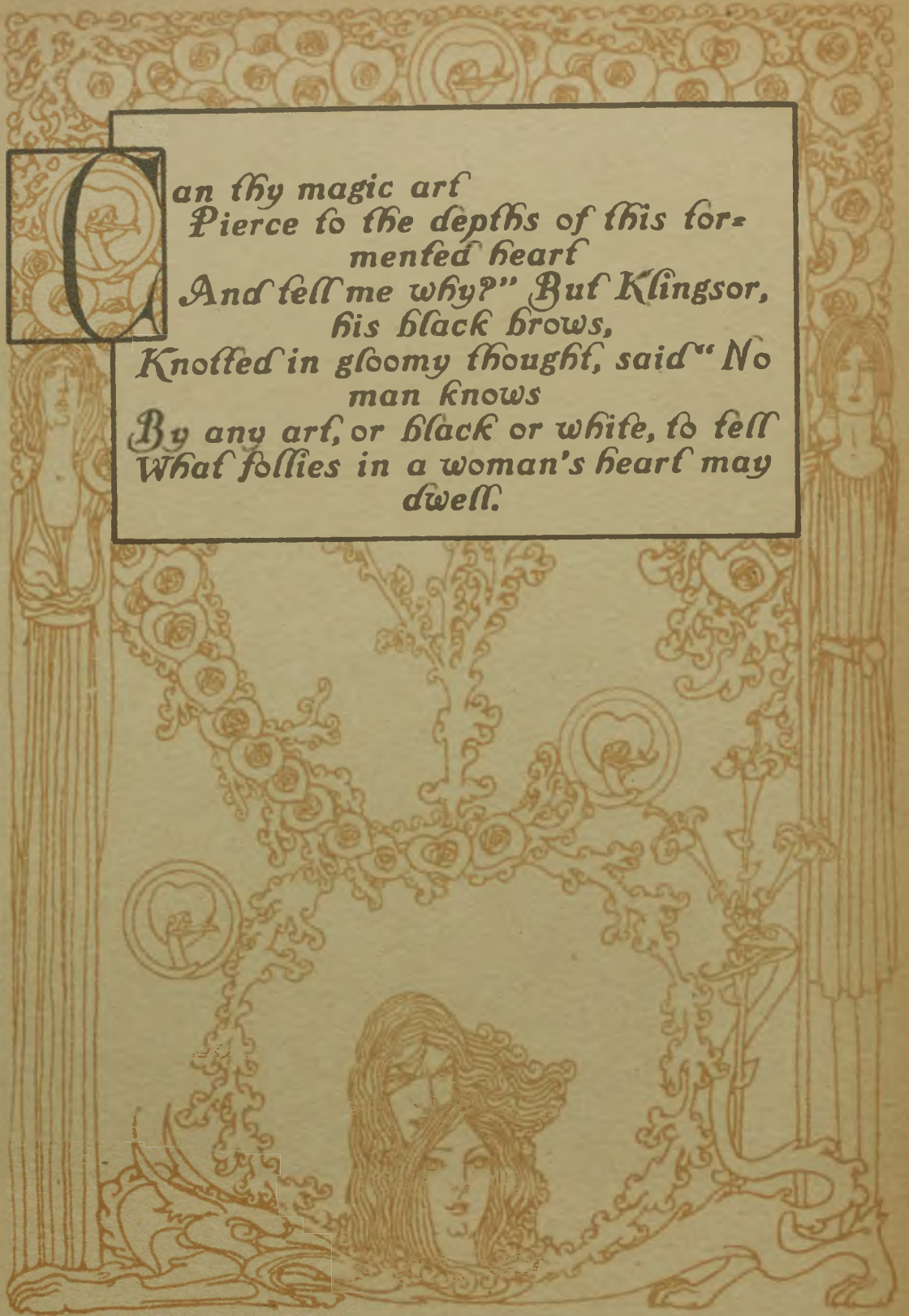


And this was Kundry, whom you
now behold
Angry, asham'd, as in her robe
of gold
In Klingsor's inner chamber to
and fro
She paces like a tigress. "Didst
thou know"
She cries, "what manner of man this
knight should be,
Whose coming, full of peril to thee
and me
Thou saw'st within the crystal globe?
I met
The maddest figure that these eyes
have yet
Beheld; half angel and half fool he
seem'd.
I tempted him - he kissed me - thou
hadst deem'd
The victory won; but I who brought
to pass
At thy behest the fall of Amfortas
Fled from this stripling!





*Can thy magic art
Pierce to the depths of this for-
mented heart
And tell me why?" But Klingsor,
his black brows,
Knotted in gloomy thought, said "No
man knows
By any art, or black or white, to tell
What follies in a woman's heart may
dwell.*



R

ound him I made a franced still-
ness brood;

The moon shone high; the forest
breath'd its balm

On the cool air, and through the
slumbrous calm

One nightingale above a shadowy mere
Poured forth his golden strain. He
wandered near,

And saw thy pearl-white limbs. No
child of man

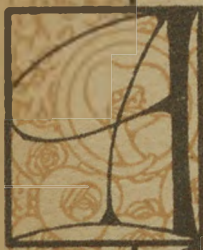
Had turn'd away! I seized the Spear
- a span

Deep in his side I drove it, as he lay
Clasped in thy arms;









*And ever since that day
A blight hath rested on Mont-
salvat; shorn
Of half its pride, despondent and
forlorn*

*The Order droops; no medicine may
heal*

*Amfortas' wound; the vision of the
Grail*

Serves but to keep him living in his woe.

*The hour is coming, Kundry, when
this too,*

*This heavenly treasure, from his
nerveless hand*

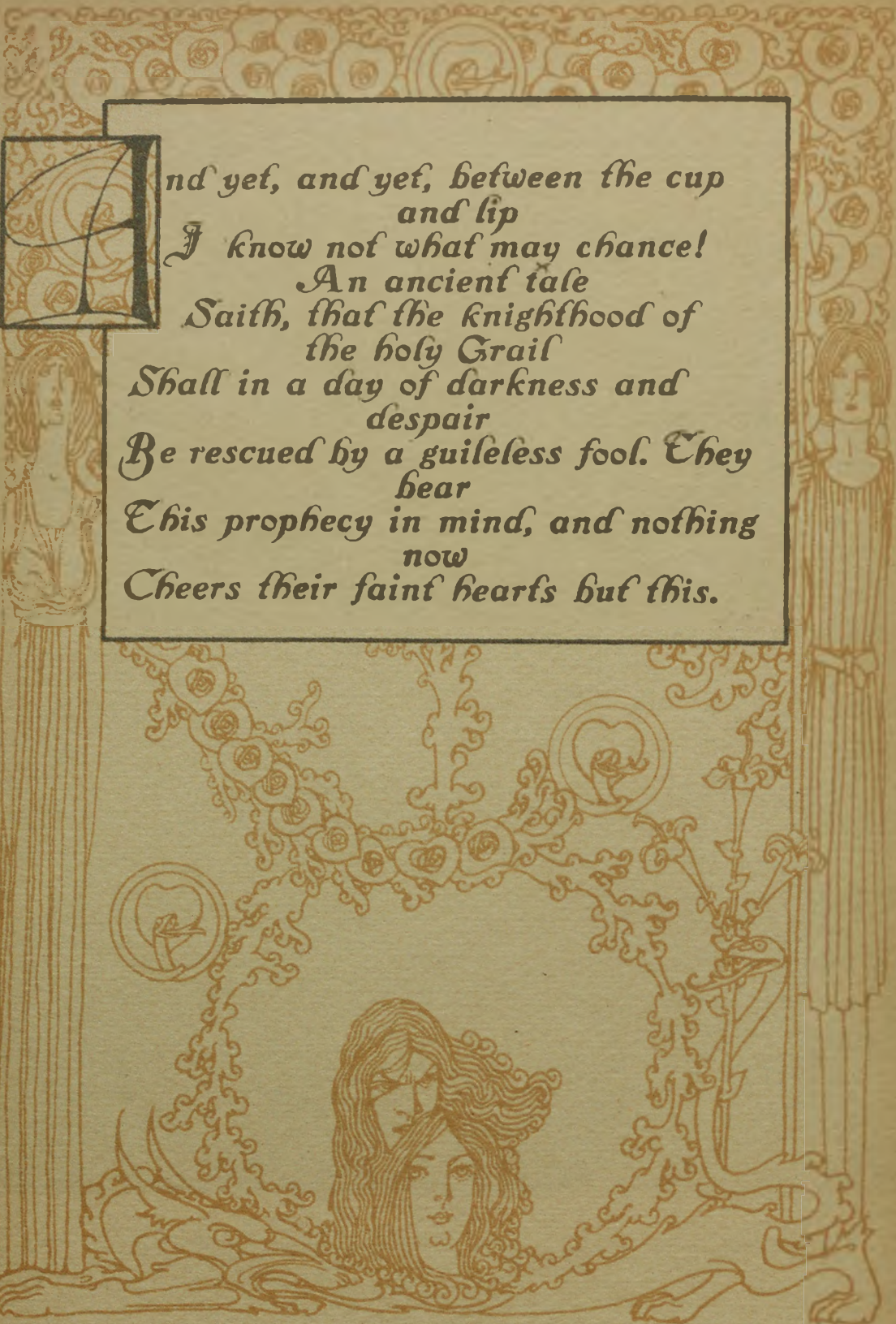
*We shall wrest, thou and I; at our
command*

*Shall be its mighty powers — yea we
shall reign*

*Over the weakling crew that in
disdain*

Denied me entrance to their fellowship



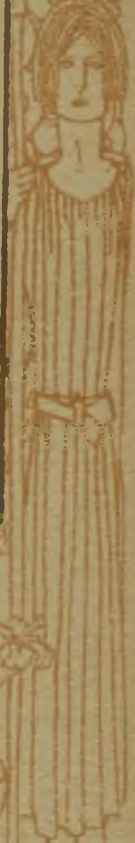


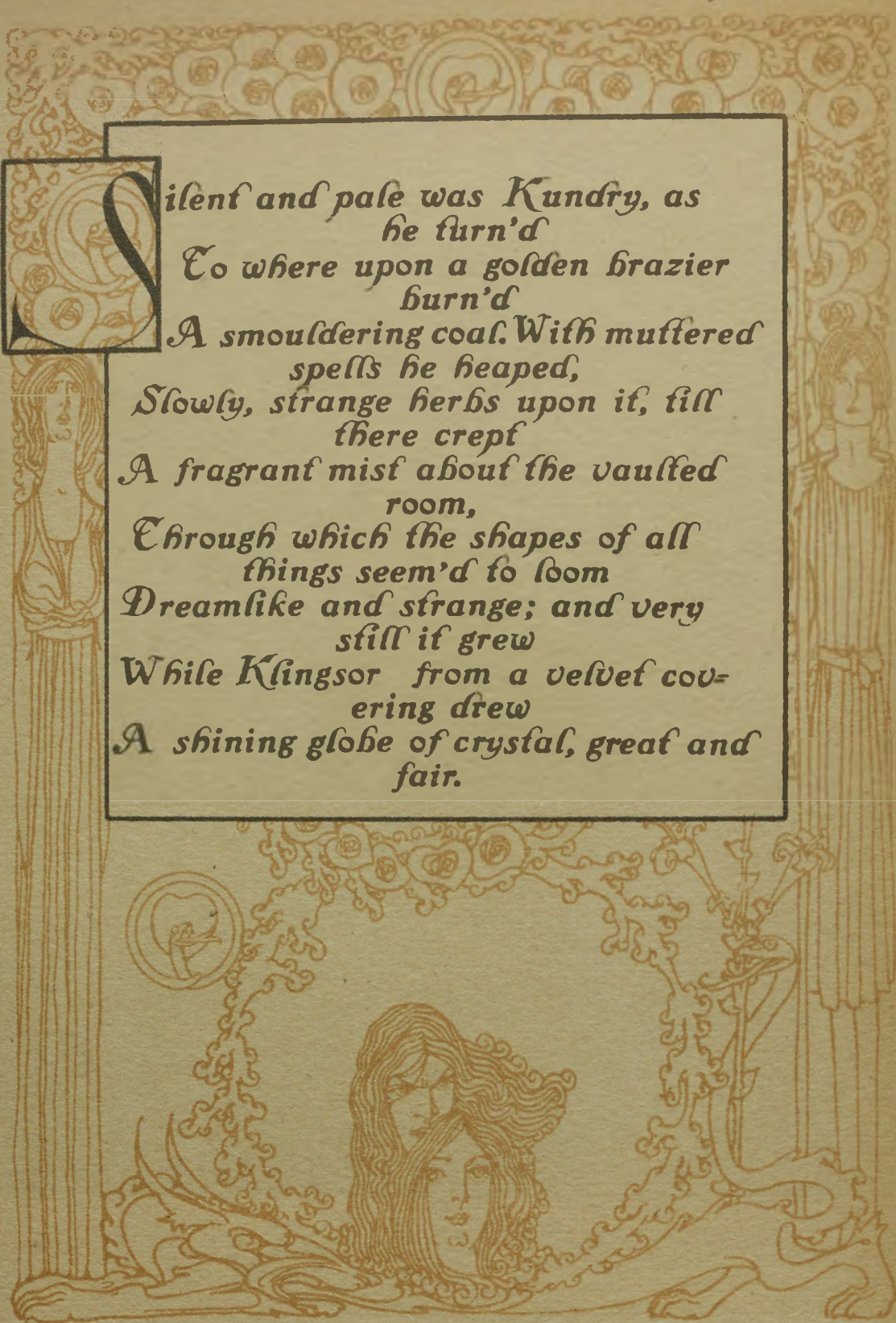
And yet, and yet, between the cup
and lip
I know not what may chance!
An ancient tale
Saith, that the knighthood of
the holy Grail
Shall in a day of darkness and
despair
Be rescued by a guileless fool. They
bear
This prophecy in mind, and nothing
now
Cheers their faint hearts but this.





ow comest thou
From a most strange encounter!
Thou did'st meet
A Fool — thou said'st it — who
could yet defeat
My wisdom and thy wiles! If this
were he!
O potent Art, immortal Sorcery,
Once more command those visions
to appear
That drift and change within my
crystal sphere!
O teach me where and when upon
his path
Once more temptation I may fling,
or death!"

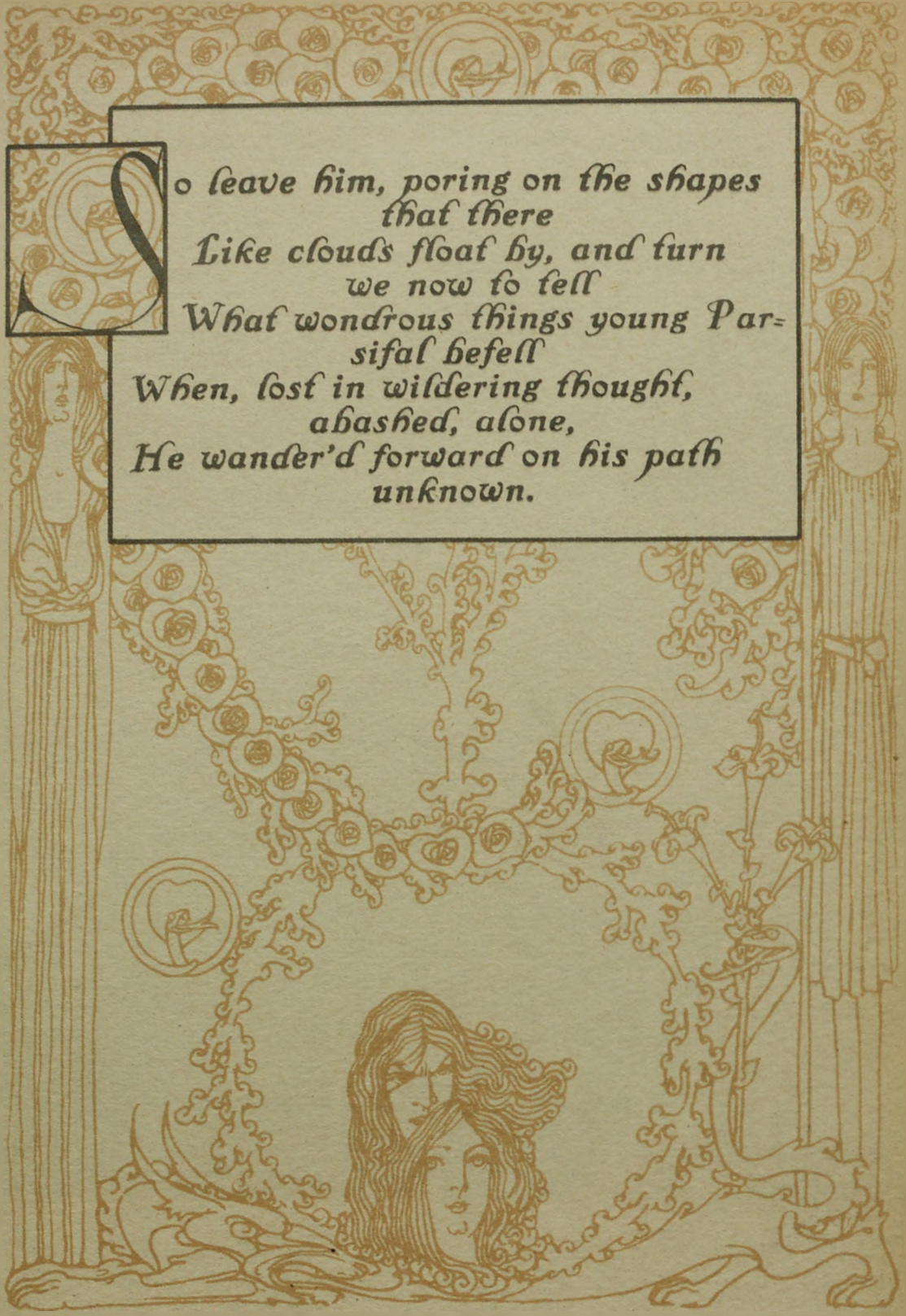




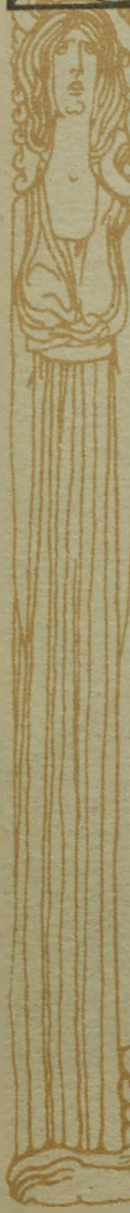
Silent and pale was Kundry, as
he turn'd
To where upon a golden brazier
burn'd
A smouldering coal. With muttered
spells he heaped,
Slowly, strange herbs upon it, till
there crept
A fragrant mist about the vaulted
room,
Through which the shapes of all
things seem'd to loom
Dreamlike and strange; and very
still it grew
While Klingsor from a velvet cov-
ering drew
A shining globe of crystal, great and
fair.



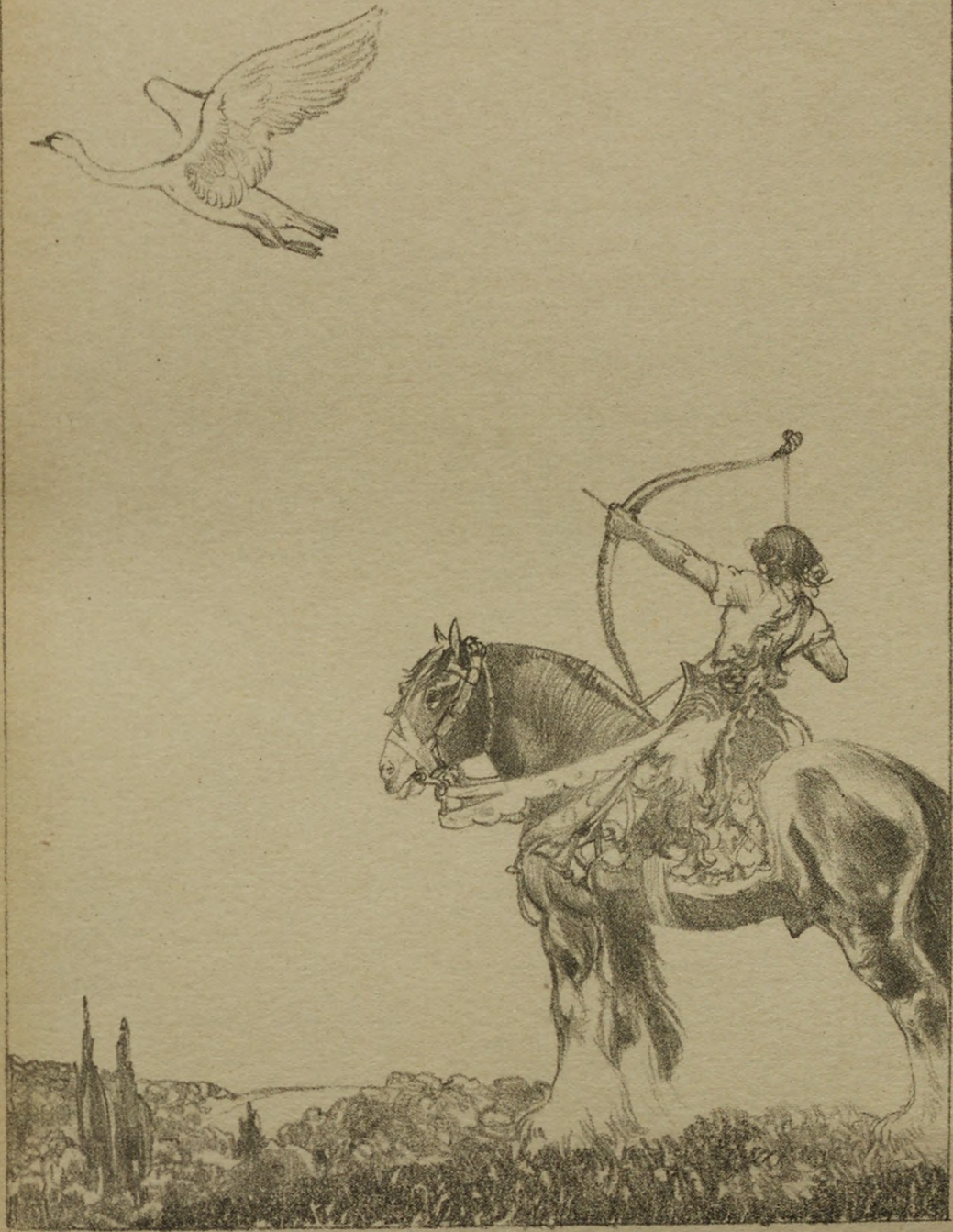




So leave him, poring on the shapes
that there
Like clouds float by, and turn
we now to tell
What wondrous things young Par-
sifal befell
When, lost in wildering thought,
abashed, alone,
He wander'd forward on his path
unknown.



Part IV · Parsifal · the · Fool.







*Three days and nights of wandering
in the wood
Had Parsifal, and whiles he shot
for food
Some wild thing with his bow,
and whiles he shared
Some charcoal-burner's simple meal.
So fared
He onward, till across an open glade
One morning, in the slanting beams
that played
On plume and breastplate, he beheld
a knight
Full arm'd and nobly mounted. At
the sight
His heart beat fast - that other, as
on guard,
Sat motionless, and seem'd as though
he harred
All passage on that path.*





*Then Parsifal
Still drawing nearer, felt his
temples swell
With rising blood, marking the
silent threat
Of vizer'd helm and ready lance—
but yet
He deem'd it courteous to begin with
speech,
And said: "Fair sir, good morrow!
Can'st thou teach
A stranger in these woods to find
the track
Which leads to Montsalvat?" "I bid
thee back!"
The other growled. "By Klingsor's
high command,
Whose word none gainsayeth in this
forest land,
None thitherward may pass".*



A large, ornate initial letter 'W' in a black box, set against a background of intricate gold filigree. The letter is stylized with a large loop and a sharp point.

Who Klingsor is
I know not", quoth the lad, "nor
care, but this
I know, that if thou seek to bar
my way
Thou dost it at thy peril". "For the
fray"
Replied the knight, "I have more lust
than thou;
But first it is my lord's will ye should
know
Who bars the way, and why. The
mighty Seer
Whose knight I, Ferris, am, for
many a year
Hath warr'd upon Montsalvat, to
requite
Great wrongs they did him;





nd to such a plight
They now are brought, that from
them he hath torn
The magic Spear, that long ago
was borne –
So runs their fable – by the hand
that shed
The blood of Christ. Their King
we left half dead
And all dishonour'd, and we cannot
fail
But soon achieve the conquest of
the Grail.
Wherefore be wise, and cast not in
thy lot
With those that now, abandon'd and
forgot
Even by the God they serve, wait
but the hour
When they and all they have to
Klingsor's power
Shall lie subject.





*Thou seem'st a gallant youth—
For such hath Klingsor welcome;
and in sooth
Thou'lt find his service rich in
all delight.*

*Nought can his servants wish, but
he'll requite
Their valour to their hearts' content.*

*Let be
Thy foolish, hopeless quest, and ride
with me*

*To fairer fortune, lordlier reward".
Then thunder'd Parsifal: "No more!*

*On guard!
Spawn of the Powers of Hell, 'tis
thou or I."*

*With that they drave together furi-
ously,*

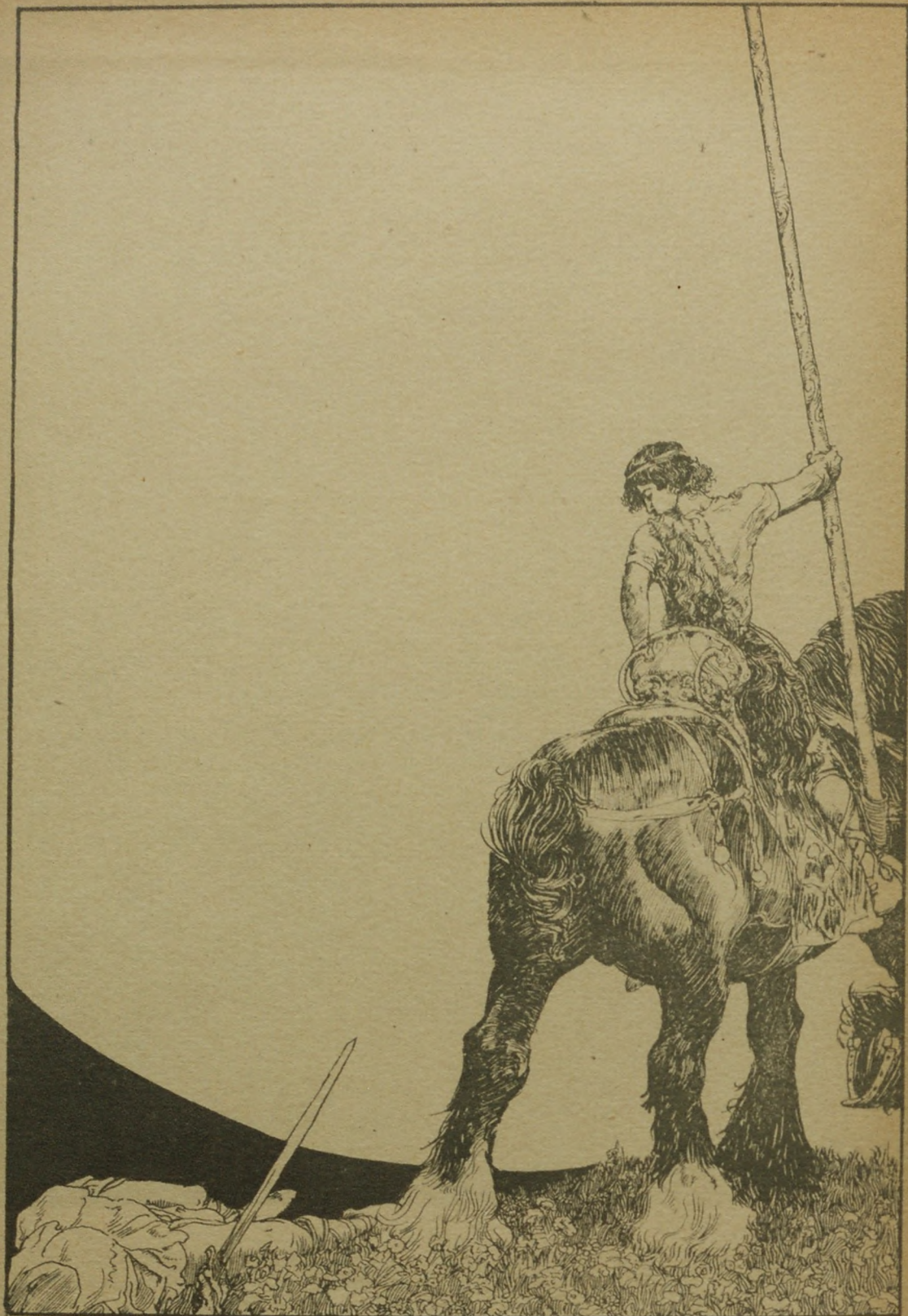




And though his paltry shield sufficed
to guide
The spear of Ferris harmless to
one side,
Yet, as they shocked, his aged
horse, o'erthrown,
Crash'd with his rider to the earth.
Then down
Alighted Ferris, sword in hand to
kill—
But Parsifal sprang up, and grasping
still
His mighty stake, swung it aloft,
and laid
So fierce a downstroke on his foe-
man's head
That helm and buckler shiver'd,
and he lay
A tumbled heap upon the trampled
clay
As though heaven's bolt had crush'd
him.







B

reathless there
Awhile stood Parsifal; then sword
and spear,
Corselet, and all of the dead
knight's array
That still might serve, he gather'd
as they lay.
These on his horse he bound, and
then bestrode
The younger steed, and driving on
the road
The laden beast in front, so fared
he on.





nd thus the long day passed; and
as the sun
Through painted windows in a
holy place
Makes a rich light, so, in the level
rays
That from the sunset's heart of rose
and gold
Flooded the wood, did Parsifal behold
A solemn glory fill the forest aisles
That ever loftier grew, with long de-
files
Green-carpeted, and sown with
flowers, where free
Of tangling undergrowth, in majesty
The giant boles of oak and chestnut
rose.
Here, as the summer day drew to
its close,
Would Parsifal to spend the night
prepare.



T

*hen hearing far-off on the evening
air*

*The sound of winnowing wings,
he halted, still,*

*Crossbow in hand, with reayy bolt,
until*

*A wild white swan all fearless by
him flew.*

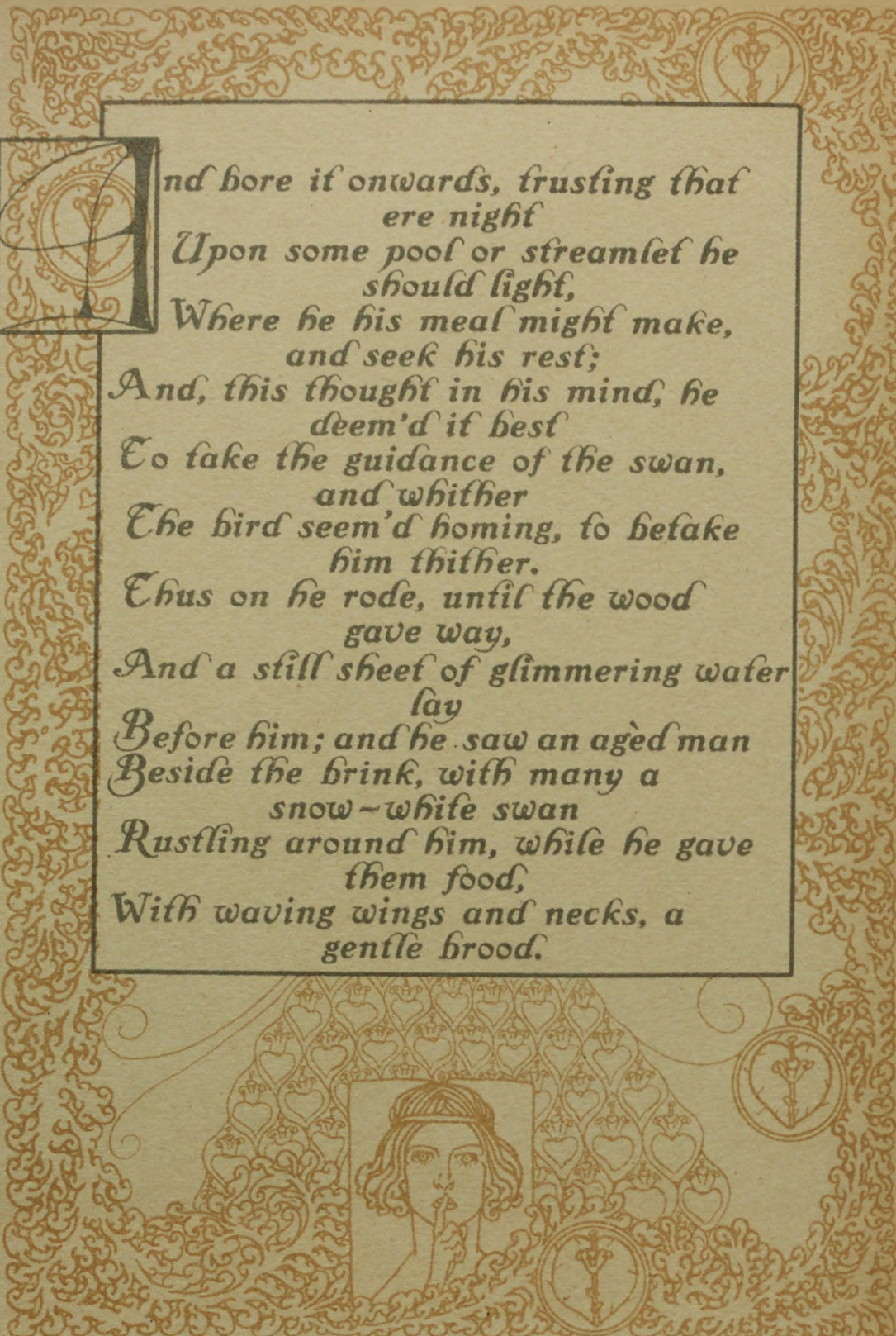
*And this with swift unerring shaft
he slew,*





*And bore it onwards, trusting that
ere night
Upon some pool or streamlet he
should light,
Where he his meal might make,
and seek his rest;
And, this thought in his mind, he
deem'd it best
To take the guidance of the swan,
and whither
The bird seem'd homing, to betake
him thither.
Thus on he rode, until the wood
gave way,
And a still sheet of glimmering water
lay
Before him; and he saw an aged man
Beside the brink, with many a
snow-white swan
Rustling around him, while he gave
them food,
With waving wings and necks, a
gentle brood.*





And bore it onwards, trusting that
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Upon some pool or streamlet he
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snow-white swan
Rustling around him, while he gave
them food,
With waving wings and necks, a
gentle brood.







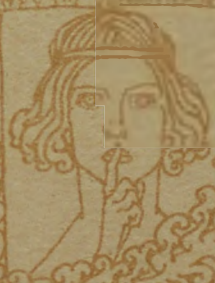
*little further a fall maiden kneeled,
Holding a bowl of bronze, with
porridge filled,
And fed the yellow cygnets; with
reproof*

*And laughing menace ever warding off
The long white necks that sought the
young ones' share.*





And now no sooner were the twain
 aware
Of Parsifal and his strange cav-
 alcade,
And the tossed heap of snowy
 plumage laid
Across his saddle-bow, than all
 dismay'd,
Mute, motionless, they stared on him;
 so he
Drew rein, and feeling, albeit he
 knew not why,
Confused and sham'd, he lighted down.
Then spake
That aged man: "O youth, this quiet
 lake
Is no resort for such as thou, with
 whom
The signs of death and battle to
 this home
Of love and peace are brought. What
 seek'st thou here?
Thou, the first stranger that for many
 a year
Our eyes have seen?"





hen spake the youth, "I met
A day's march hence, an armed
champion set
By Klingsor, he averred, to bar
the pass
That leads to Montsalvat. We fought;
by grace
Of God I overthrew him; and his
gear
And battle-steed I took. Nought
seek I here
But water, and a couch of moss, a
fire
Of fallen boughs; and if this small
desire
Thou grant me of thy courtesy, at
dawn
I ride upon my way". The maid had
drawn
Now closer to her sire, and as they
learned
Of Ferris and his fall, starting they
turned
And each on each a moment gazed,
their eyes
Filled with great wonder and a
strange surmise.


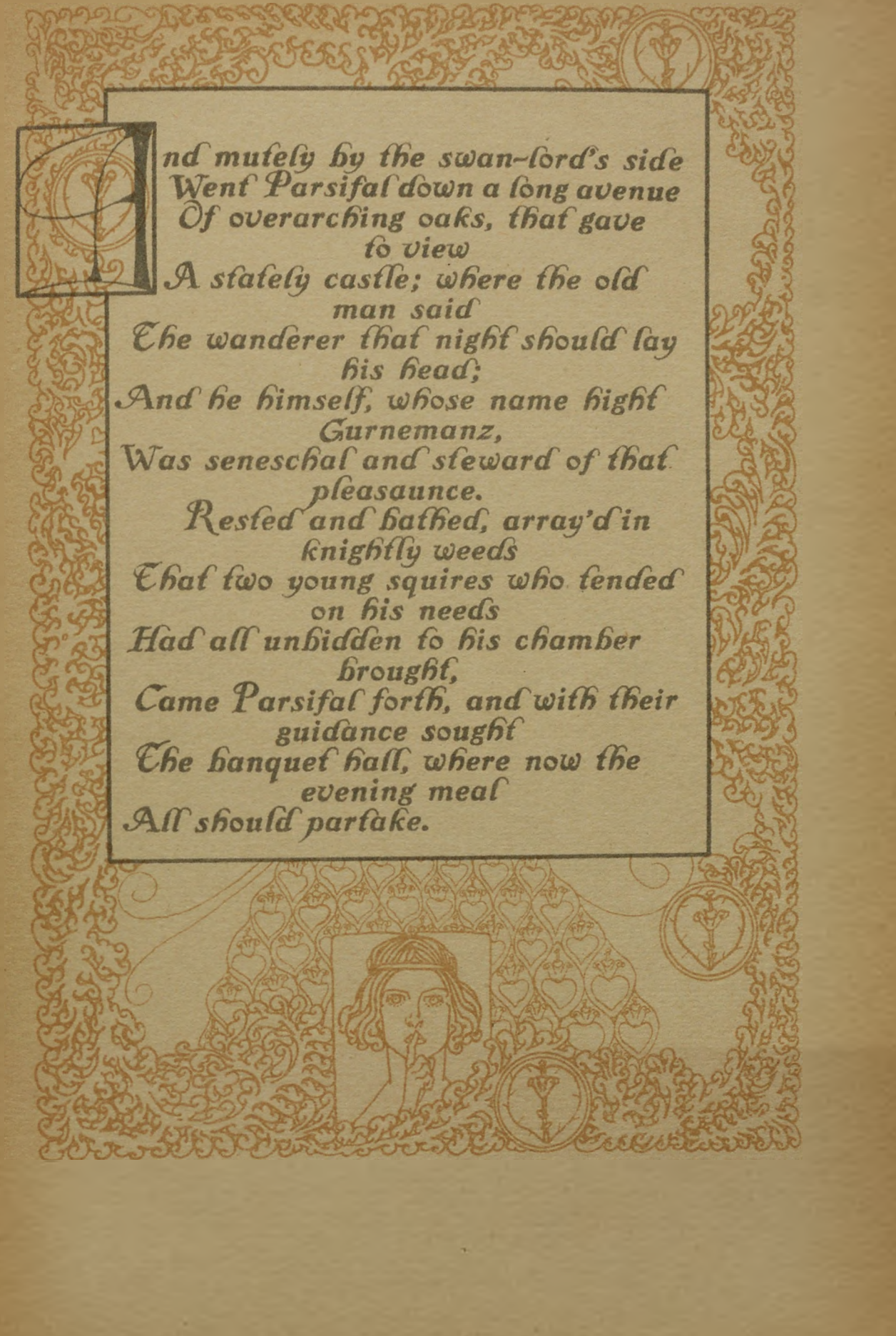


Then spake the sire again: "Thou
hast o'erthrown
Thy foe, and ours, and God's.
Were this alone
The stain upon thy hand; and must
thou slay
Innocence too and beauty? Fearless,
gay,
Within this fair and wide domain
are all
Things that have life. My daughter
Blaniid's call
Brings the red squirrel from the bough;
the snake
Glides to her foot; the blackbird in
the brake
Sings loudest when she passes near
—and now
With the red stain upon that breast
of snow
Thy dart hath pierc'd, are death and
anguish wrought
By human hands among the things
we taught
To love and trust us". Thus the old
man said,
And Parsifal bow'd low his proud
young head,



W
hile love and sorrow from the
world's deep heart
Wrought for the first time in his
own the smart
Of pity and remorse. Silent he set
The crossbow to his knee, and
grasping it
At either end, the stock of stubborn oak
With one strong wrench in pieces twain
he broke.
Then glancing up he caught in the
wet eyes
Of Blandid, such a smile, that for such
prize
It seem'd to him, a man might well
have wrought
The mightiest things, and yet deserved
it not.
So for a single moment big with fate
A wordless converse, high and pass-
ionate,
Their young eyes held; and then they
turn'd aside
Flushing,





And mutely by the swan-lord's side
Went Parsifal down a long avenue
Of overarching oaks, that gave
to view
A stately castle; where the old
man said
The wanderer that night should lay
his head;
And he himself, whose name hight
Gurnemanz,
Was seneschal and steward of that
pleasaunce.
Rested and bathed, array'd in
knightly weeds
That two young squires who tended
on his needs
Had all unbidden to his chamber
brought,
Came Parsifal forth, and with their
guidance sought
The banquet hall, where now the
evening meal
All should partake.





Soon music 'gan to peal
Along the lilyed arches of the hall,
Where Parsifal waited what should
next befall.

And first he saw, the stately portal
through
A pomp of knights come pouring,
two by two,
In long blue silver-border'd mantles
clad,
Whereof each one upon the shoulder
had
The image of a cup in silver done.
Thus streamed they in till each his
station won,
Then with low'rd eyes and sombre
brows they stood
Like men upon some bitter shame
who brood.





ext, shoulder-high upon a litter
borne
Entered what seem'd a dying man,
so worn,
So pale, so piteous did that form
appear.

Rich furs enwrapp'd him, and his
brow did bear
A coronet with many a gem besprent.
Near by to Parsifal he passed, and
bent
From haggard eyes upon the youth
a look
So long, so full of yearning, that it
shook
The young man's heart with pity,
and well-nigh
Had broken from his trembling lips
the cry
"O Sire, what aileth thee? may aught
avail
That man may do thy grievous pain
to heal?"



But ere the words escaped, he called
to mind
How it was charged on him, that
should he find
Himself a guest within some great
lord's hall,
Naught should he ask of whatso
might befall
Strange or uncomely, till it seem'd
good
To those, his hosts, to tell him what
they would.
Thus were his lips by courtly devoir
seal'd—
Onward the litter passed; and un-
reveal'd
The load of pain and mystery that
it bore.







*But now his wondering eyes toward
the door
Again were turn'd, for next there
came in sight
A troop of maidens, whereof each
a light
Bore in her hand, that waffed rich
perfume
Of burning spices through the spa-
cious room.
Then Bland came, alone. As white
as snow
From golden head to little satin shoe
The garments that she wore.*



R

*apt and serene
She gazed, as moving slowly on,
between
The ranged lines, she bore a little
tray*

*Whereon a cloth of emerald velvet lay,
And standing upon this, some hidden
thing*

*Beneath a gold-embroider'd covering.
These to the dais at the hall's end
she bore,*

*And set them on a crystal stand
before*

*The stricken King, who with one
wasted hand*

*Covered his eyes. And now a low
demand*

*Was mutter'd round the hall, "Unveil,
unveil!"*





*he King half rose, looking with
visage pale
And agoniz'd upon the waiting
throng.*

*Silent, he prayed a minute, but
ere long*

*He set his hand upon the covering
cloth*

*And shuddering drew it off, as one
most loth*

*Who does with desperate will some
deed accurst.*

*Then, groaning, at his side he clutched,
while burst*

*Through his thin fingers a red gush
of blood.*









till mute, but clutching at his own
side, stood
Young Parsifal, with pity and
wonder thrilled.

But now he gazed upon the thing
reveal'd,

And saw a crystal chalice, great and
fair,

That seemed to pulse forth light. To
this they bear

In golden baskets, cakes of wheaten
bread,

And these among the knights distri-
buted

Change into viands of all kinds, as
each

Had will to eat; and empty cups they
reach

To every knight, that straight with
wine are brimmed.





So speeds the wondrous feast; but
mirth is dimmed
For Parsifal, for all, by that
drear thing
Upon the daïs, where the wounded
King
Lies moaning, tended on by maidens
twain
Who strive with healing herbs to as-
suage the pain
That wrings his side, and stanch
that bloody stream.
Now in the helpless passion of
some dream
To Parsifal the long day seem'd to
move
When first he look'd on death and
woe and love.
Benumb'd bewilder'd,



W

hen the feast was o'er
He rose, and led by Gurnemanz,
once more
His chamber sought. The old man
held his hand
Long while, and strangely long his
features scann'd.
Then, with a sigh, commended him
to God.
But even while his parting footsteps
trod
The echoing corridor, the youth lay
drowned
In seas of sleep, that eddied, soft,
profound,
About the wearied limbs and beating
brain,
Till morn should wake him to new
joy, new pain.





Part V. The Spear.





ow bloomed the rose of morning
in the sky,
And all the encircling woods rang
joyfully
With myriad twitterings of birds,
whose call
From dreamless sleep awakened
Parsifal.
Quickly he rose; and, all unhelped,
did on
The warlike gear he had from Ferris
won;
Then issued forth to greet his hosts,
resolved
That now at last the mystery should
be solved
Of who and what these were, and if
in sooth—
For now his heart had half divined
the truth—
His way had led him to that holy
place
Wherein the Grail, by God's myste-
rious grace
Was housed and adored; and where
he felt
Perchance for him another treasure
dwell.



ut when he reach'd the banquet
hall, he found
Nor knight nor squire, nor any
sight or sound
Of human life: wide open every
door

In all the castle, and from floor to
floor
He wander'd, searching, calling; but
his voice
Re-echoed idly with a dreary noise
Through the long corridors and empty
halls.

Then search'd he through the court-
yard and the stalls
That all deserted lay; but here he
found
His war-horse, saddled, to a pillar
bound
As ready for the road. Wondering,
and sore
At heart, at length he mounted, and
crossed o'er
The lowered drawbridge, but he scarce
had won
The further side, when with a clang
came down
The portcullis behind him.

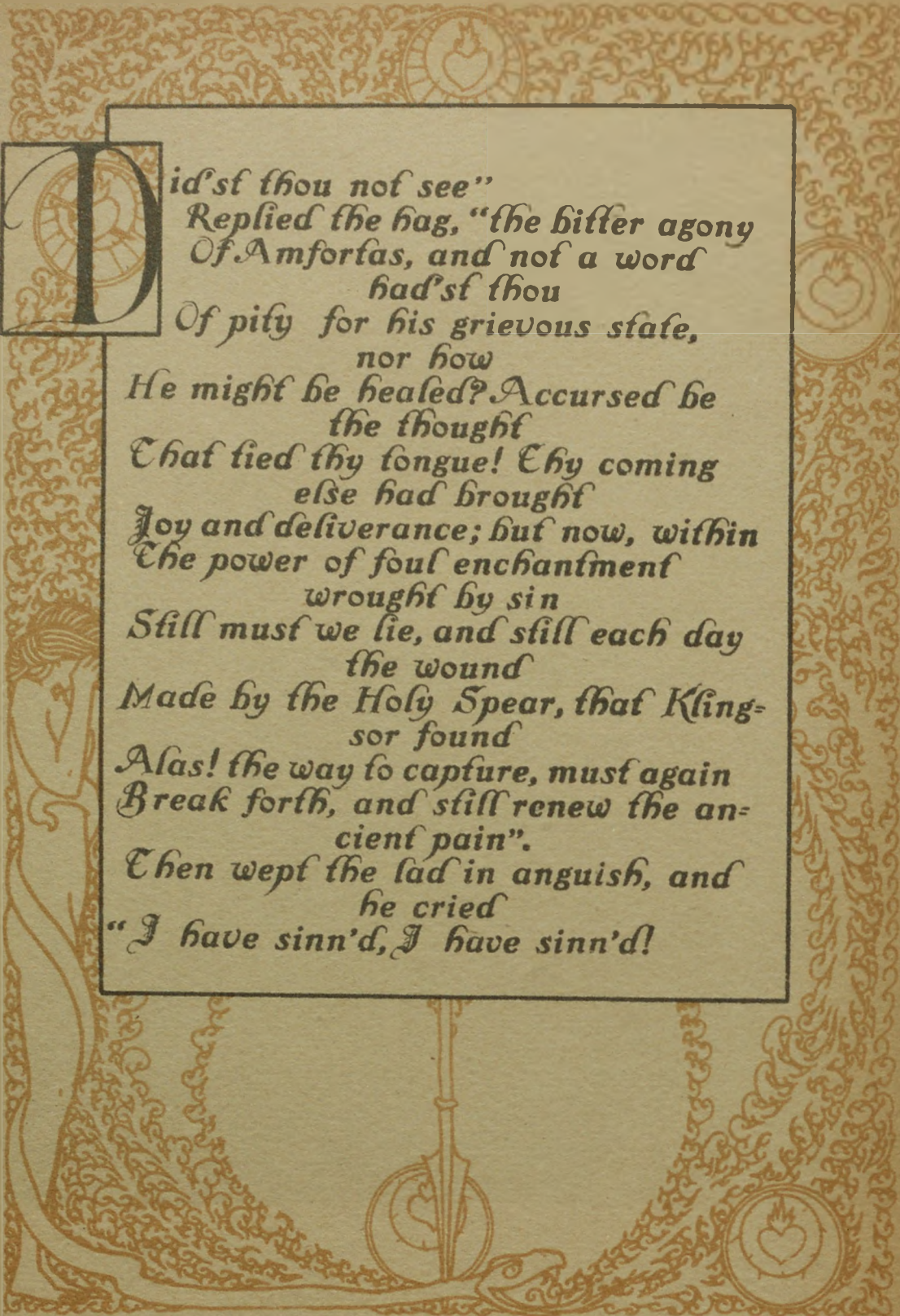




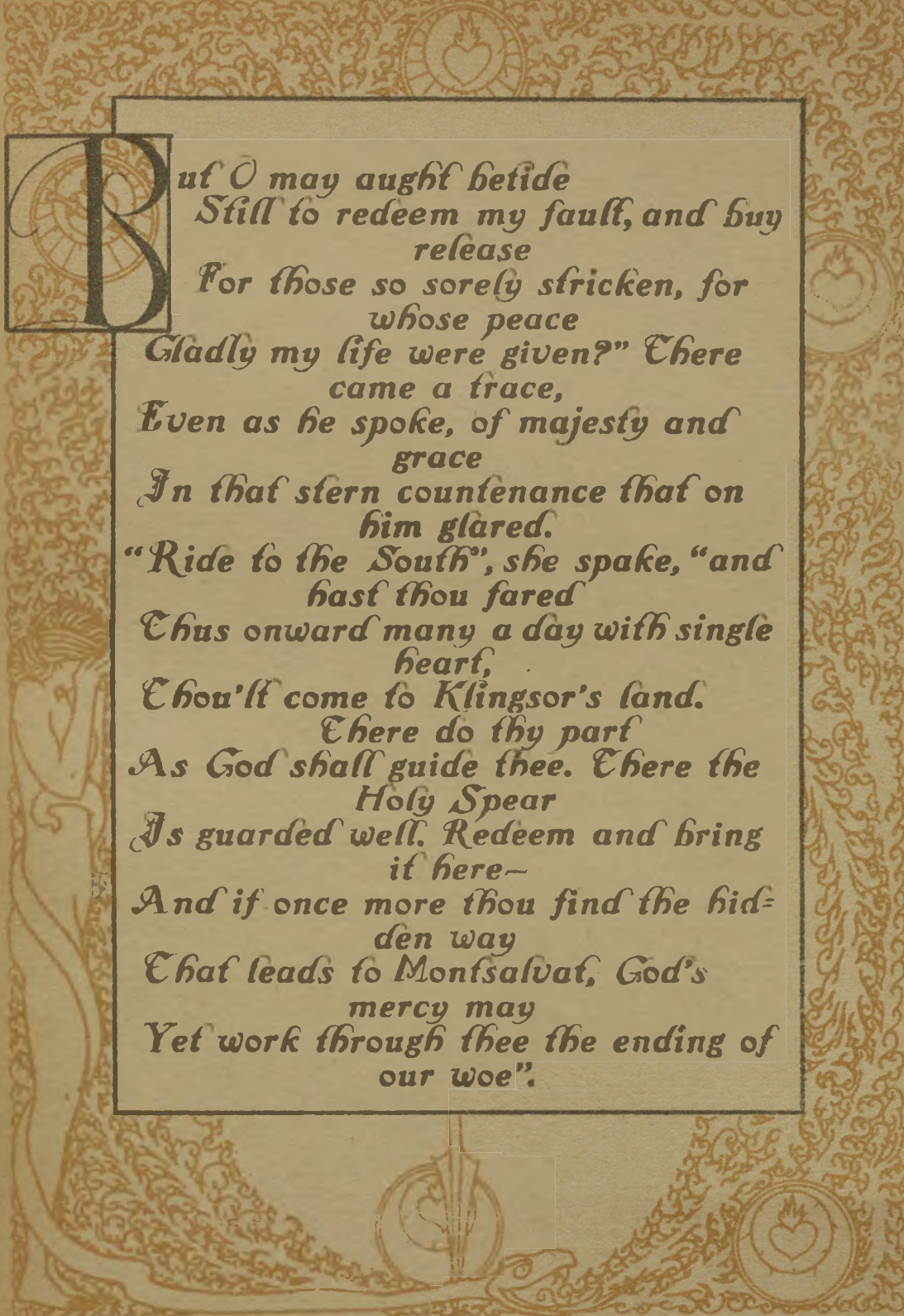


*I*n amaze
He wheel'd his steed, and saw a
woman's face
Look from a casement by the gate-
and fear
Made his heart quail, so evil did
appear
That visage, with grey locks and eyes
of fire
Red-rimm'd, and scor'd by lines of
passions dire.
Ere he could speak, she hissed:
"Gander, begone!
Go get thyself a goose, and leave alone
The swans of Montsalvat!" Then in
despair
Cried Parsifal: "For God's love, tell
me where
And how I have offended; for full
well
I know, though how it was I cannot
tell
I have ill requited grace bestow'd
on me
Far, far beyond my worth".





Did'st thou not see"
Replied the hag, "the bitter agony
Of Amfortas, and not a word
had'st thou
Of pity for his grievous state,
nor how
He might be healed? Accursed be
the thought
That tied thy tongue! Thy coming
else had brought
Joy and deliverance; but now, within
The power of foul enchantment
wrought by sin
Still must we lie, and still each day
the wound
Made by the Holy Spear, that Kling-
sor found
Alas! the way to capture, must again
Break forth, and still renew the an-
cient pain".
Then wept the lad in anguish, and
he cried
"I have sinn'd, I have sinn'd!"

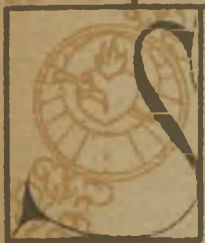


But O may aught betide
Still to redeem my fault, and buy
release
For those so sorely stricken, for
whose peace
Gladly my life were given?" There
came a trace,
Even as he spoke, of majesty and
grace
In that stern countenance that on
him glared.
"Ride to the South", she spake, "and
hast thou fared
Thus onward many a day with single
heart,
Thou'lt come to Klingsor's land.
There do thy part
As God shall guide thee. There the
Holy Spear
Is guarded well. Redeem and bring
it here—
And if once more thou find the hid-
den way
That leads to Montsalvat, God's
mercy may
Yet work through thee the ending of
our woe".

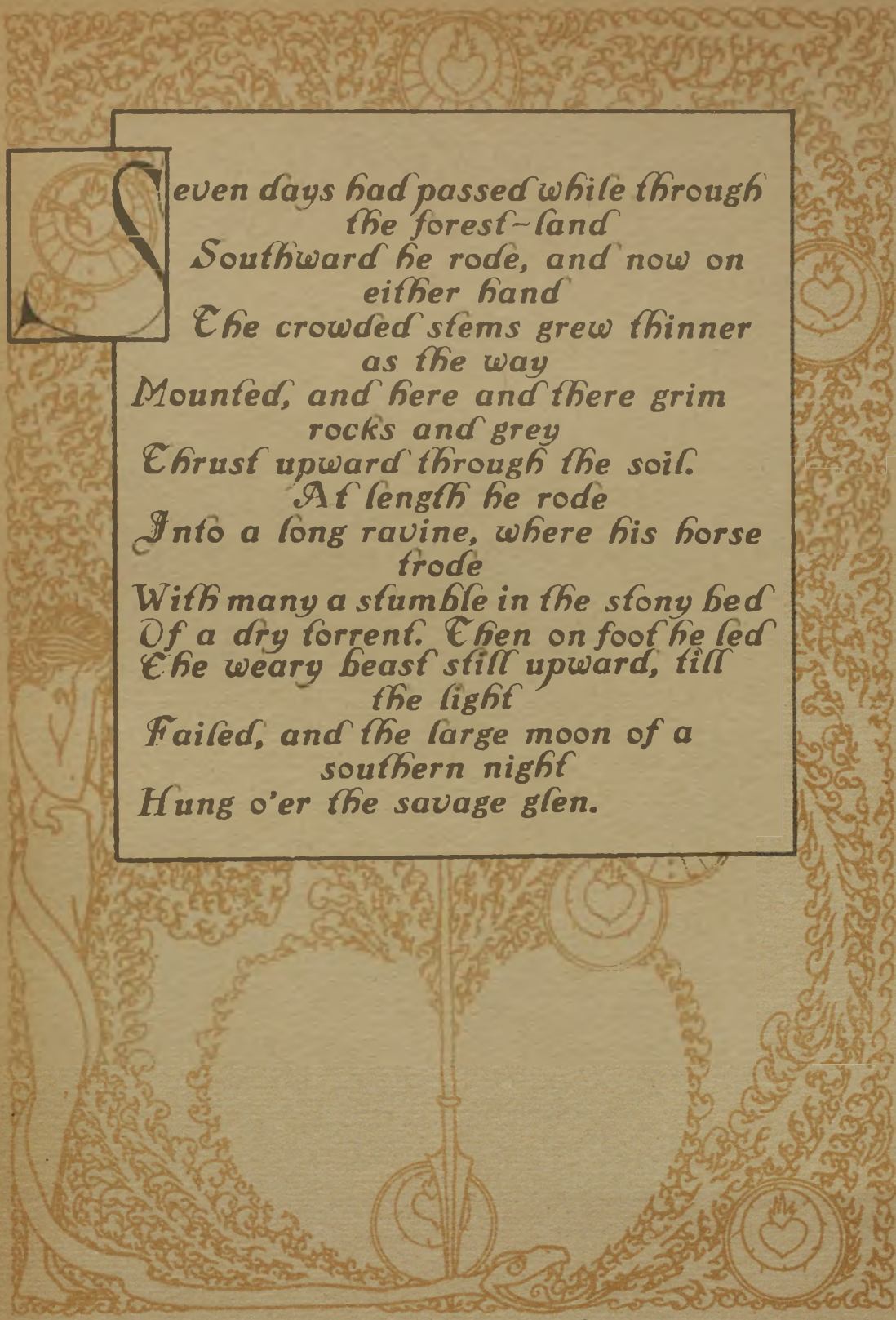


he vanished from his sight; and
he to go
Turned slowly, pondering on many
a thing—
Blamid, the swan, the Grail, the
stricken King—
While still before him like a star
burn'd clear
That message of high hope, "Redeem
the Spear!"





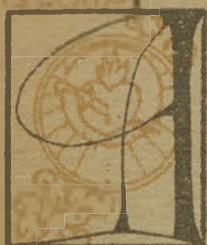
*Seven days had passed while through
the forest-land
Southward he rode, and now on
either hand
The crowded stems grew thinner
as the way
Mounted, and here and there grim
rocks and grey
Thrust upward through the soil.
At length he rode
Into a long ravine, where his horse
trode
With many a stumble in the stony bed
Of a dry torrent. Then on foot he led
The weary beast still upward, till
the light
Failed, and the large moon of a
southern night
Hung o'er the savage glen.*





*Lofty and bare,
But for the withren pines that
rooted there
In fissured rocks, the frowning
walls arose
Cowering about him, seeming to enclose
A space, with outlet none, save for
the track
By which he came. At last a gorge,
all black,
Unvisited by any ray of light
From sun or moon, where immemo-
rial Night
Lay ever couch'd, he found, and
winning through
With toil and pain, upon his eyes a
view
Of wildering beauty burst.*





A garden there
Lay spread before him. In the
upper air
Darkly the plumes of many a palm=
tree hung,
And by each path to rock or stem
there clung
Long trailers, starr'd with blossom,
whose rich scent
Filled all the moonlit air. A deep
content
Sang in the low voice of a little
stream
That murmured through the vale,
with wandering gleam
Lighting the shadowy meads. Beyond
these howers
Of Paradise, arose the glimmering
towers
Of a great palace, builded fair and
well
That drank the sleepy moonshine,
as it fell
On dome and galleried wall. Parsifal
stared,
Rapt with the magic vision—then he
fared
Onward again,



*But ere he could attain
The carven gateway of that palace,
fain
Was he to halt once more; for in
his way,
Beneath o'erarching boughs of moon-
white May,
Even as at first, he saw before him
stand
The Lady of the Forest. One small
hand
Caught to her bosom a long cymar's
fold,
Translucent, shot with gleams of
woven gold,
Through which the sheen of lovely
side and limb
Shone like drown'd marble in the
sea-tides dim.
Her night-black tresses were unbound,
her feet
Bare in the grass; she seem'd in that
retreat
Its beauty's very soul, unearthly fair
Beyond mortality or grief or care.*







Speechless with wonder, leaning on
his lance
Stood Parsifal, and Kundry with
one glance
Reading the signs of toil and pain
that marr'd
His once so joyous youth, felt her
heart stirr'd
With sudden pity. "Welcome here!"
she spake,
"O gentle friend, whom once I did
forsake
Ungently - ah me! little dost thou
know,
Nor may I tell thee why we parted so.
Enough - we meet again. Here shalt
thou find
Rest, and heart's ease, and all things
to thy mind.
Lay off thine arms; to-night a
healing balm
Breathes from the earth and sky.
O let it calm
The inward strife, the bitterness,
the pain
That in thy brows I read,



And bring again
The youth I talked with half a
summer's day
Not long ago": "O far and far away"
Said Parsifal, "seems now that
youth of mine.

I am not what I was. A gift divine
Came to my hands - witless I let it go.
Speak not to me of peace, for I may
know
Peace and content no more till strife
hath won
Pardon, or death. But lady, till the sun
Be risen again, most fain of rest am I.
Say then, who dwells in this fair
place, and by
What name I have to call thee, whom
I deem
Its queen and mistress".





undry veiled the gleam
Of bitter knowledge in her eyes,
then raised
Their silken lashes, and awhile
she gazed

Silent upon the young man's face.

At last

The fount of tears, long sealed, broke
forth, and fast
The brimming drops o'erflow'd; and
soon the proud
And smiling queen no more he saw,
but bowed
Before his feet, on which full many
a tear
Rained down, there lay a woman in
despair.

"O leave me not", she cried, and seized
the hand

Stretched forth to soothe and bless
her, "nor demand

To learn my shame and woe. What
once I was

I, too, no longer am. O let it pass
That bitter past, and make me wholly
thine!



*lingsor thy foe awaits thee here—
'twas mine
To lure thee to his yoke— Hence,
hence in haste!
More shalt thou learn when, in
thy love embraced,
Redeemed, uplifted, at thy side
I dwell;
And this shall be my joy to teach,
how well
A woman's heart of flame can warm
the life
Of one she loves". Heartshaken with
the strife
Of thronging passions, Parsifal saw
clear
Nought but the beauty and the pain
that here
Writhed at his feet. He stooped and
sought to raise
That stricken form, but Kundry, all
ablaze
E'en at his touch with the resistless
fire
Of half despairing love and fierce
desire
Sprang to her feet,*



And round his neck she flung
Her straining arms; their lips
together clung
In a wild kiss, and all the scene,
and all
Memory and thought were drowned
for Parsifal
Beneath a whelming flood of fierce
delight,
And all his life seem'd made for this
one night.
And still their lips were joined,
when with the pang
Of that high rapture, recollection
sprang
Full-armed upon him. With a broken
cry
Of Blanid, Blanid! loosing angrily
The arms that clasped him, by the
shoulders fair
Kundry he seized, and held her gripped,



But ere

*The words were said that in his
bosom strove
For utterance, she scream'd, seeing
above*

*The youth's unconscious head a figure
lean
From a tall window, and she saw
the sheen
Of moonlight on a levell'd spear. One
hound,
And Parsifal she seiz'd, and to the
ground
Dash'd him with frenzied force, and
flung between
Him and the flying death the living
screen
Of her fair body.*





*scarce did Parsifal
Know what had chanced, when,
rising from his fall,
He saw the gasping woman, with
the spear
Deep in her side, and glaring down
on her
The dark magician. Mighty then to
him
The Lords of Darkness seem'd, and
all too dim
The light of heaven upon his lonely
path.
Uncounsell'd, unbefriended, fiercely
wroth
But helpless in the toils of death
and hell
He cried upon the love of Christ to
quell
The powers of evil— then drew out
the spear
From Kundry's side, and with its
point in air
He traced the holy Sign against that
form
Which towered above him.*





hen, as when a storm
Long gathering bursts, and thought
and senses reel
Beneath the sudden, imminent
thunderpeal,
So suddenly the heavens with blinding
flame
Were torn, and with it such an up=
roar came
As all the thunders of the world in one
Had crashed above his head. Scarcely
begun
The tempest ended, and the moon
once more
Reigned in a cloudless sky—but now
before
The youth's amazed eyes was noth=
ing left
Of all that fairy scene. The vale,
bereft
Of all its plumed palms and scented
bowers
Lay bare, a stony waste—the stately
towers
Had vanished like a dream;



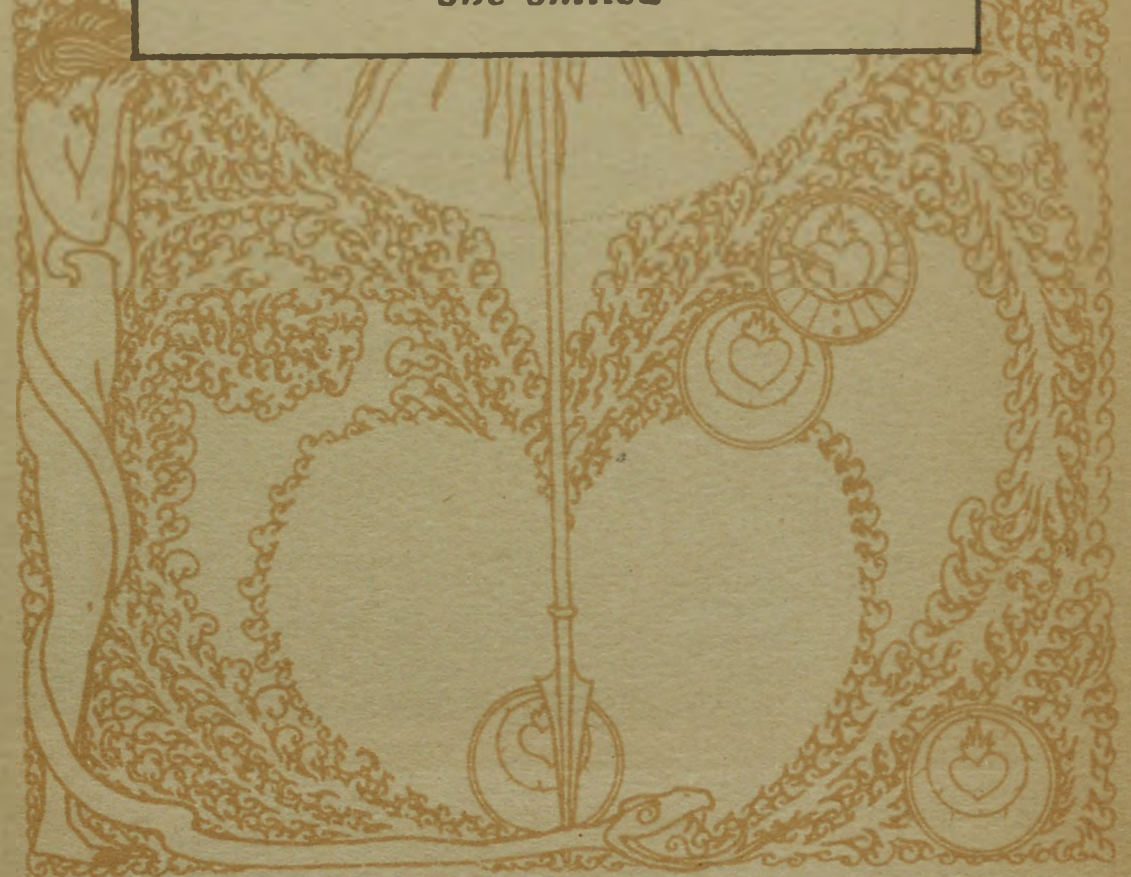
*And he had thought
A dream indeed had mock'd him,
were it not
That still before his feet the
woman lay
Whose lips he had kiss'd, and gasped
her life away.
Then, as he knelt to raise her head,
she smiled
Tenderly, happily,— a little child
Smiles even so to meet its mother's
eyes
When half asleep and cradled soft
it lies
Tir'd out with mirth and play at set
of sun.
Yet ere the end, for something to be
done
Her eyes besought him;*



W

*ith one trembling hand
She touch'd her brow, and grace
to understand
Heaven gave him. Near at hand
the rivulet*

*Whisper'd among the rocks; to this
he set
His helm, and when a cupful he had
won
Swiftly he bore it back, and traced
upon
Her brow the sign of Christ. Again
she smiled—*









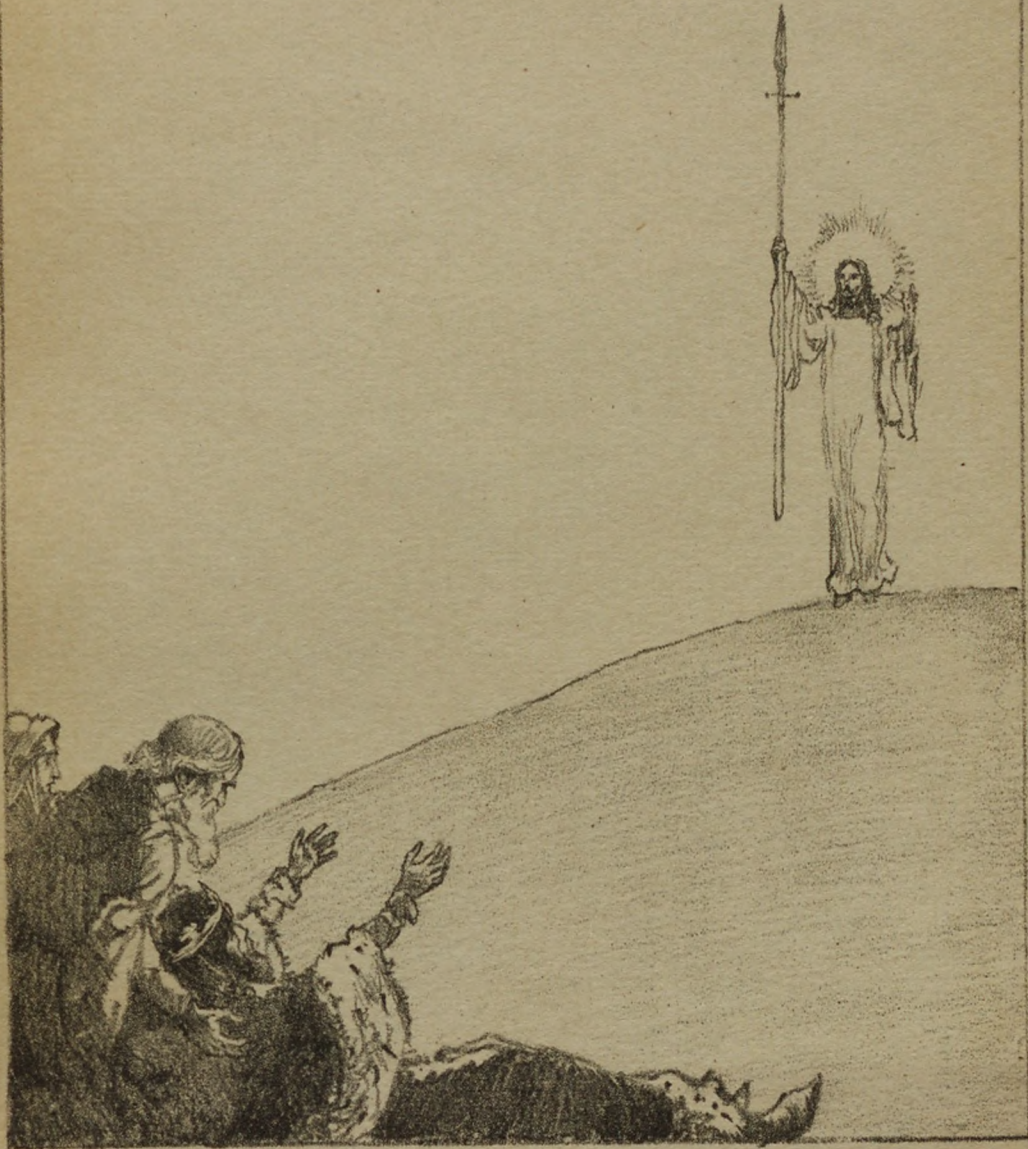
ut instantly a thing so strange
and wild
Was wrought on her, that Parsifal
in the clutch
Of horror shrieked, for at the
chrismal touch
Of water, Time with all the stor'd
up weight
Of all her centuries smote her, and
where but late
He saw a woman in her loveliness
Lay now a bald and twisted thing,
to less
Than human stature shrunken.
Dead she lay—
'Twas the last mercy that a man could
pray
For that which once was Kundry;
and there, alone,
Parsifal toiling in that place of stone
With his sword's point delved out a
little grave,
And heap'd above it many a rock,
to save
That poor marr'd body from the wild
beast's claw.

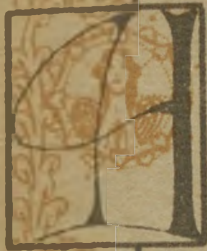


*Then lifting up the sacred spear
with awe
He bore it thence, and made his
lonely bed
Far from that savage place, where
Kundry shed
Her blood, because she had loved
much; and lies
Asleep till Barth's last morning fire
the skies.*



Part VI. The Deliverer.





How many a year hath passed, how
many a thing
Besall'n, since Eituel the war-
worn King,
When all was done in vain that
man could do

In that beleagured fortress of Anjou
Kneelt, and besought of God to let him die
Or send at last deliverance from on
high!

And now the Spring returns, and
brings again
That sacred day of Christ's victo-
rious pain:
Again the woods, the flower-strewn
meads, are rife
With herald-signs of a great wave
of life
Gathering apace, to flood the earth
once more.

And still a human spirit, in its sore
Affliction, sends to God the pit-
eous cry
For help from powers beyond mor-
tality,
Or friendly death to end its bitter
pain.



B

*eside the lake of Montsalvat again
Behold the swan-lord and his
daughter fair,
Come early forth to breathe the
morning air!*

*Sadly they move amid the flush of
Spring;*

*The old man bowed in patient suf-
fering,*

*But she with quivering lips and
restless eyes*

*That rove the forest-glades and the
blue skies,*

*As though some hidden secret they
might read,*

*Some respite find, some help in bitter
need.*

*And thus beside the lake in sombre
mood*

Silent they paced,





W

hen through the bourgeoning wood
They saw the gleam of armour, and
a knight
Upon the farther shore rode into
sight,
Then quickly spurr'd to meet them.
As for fight
Prepared, he bore a naked sword—
his face
They might not yet behold, but many
a trace
Of desperate battle in his battered
gear
They marked; above his shoulder a
great spear
Rose high, but where the gleaming
point should be
They saw a leathern casing, heedfully
Made fast with many a thong.





Said Gurnemanz

*As he drew near:—"Stranger, with
sword and lance*

*Who ridest as to war, dost thou
not know*

*What holy day thou dost dishonour so?
Or if indeed by God's will thou art
sent*

*To work our ruin, and our punishment
Fulfil, be sure that thou shalt find
no hand*

*Raised to resist thee, but to God's
command*

*We bow, and hail with grateful heart
the blow*

*That ends at last the long tale of
our woe."*



P

ardon," the stranger cried, "for
many a day
I have lost count of time; from
fray to fray
Hurl'd, by the will of Him who
made of me
His all-unworthy champion. And now
I see
To you he gives me the great joy
to bring
Deliverance, and to Amfortas, your
king
Pardon and peace:"









hen Gurnemanz,
Their joyful greetings done, spake
solemnly:—

“Hearken, my Son, while I declare
to thee

Things greater, stranger, than thou
wolt'st of yet.

I knew thee for the son of Gamuret,
Brother of Amfortas, the noble seed
Of Eiturel our glorious King now
dead,

Since first I saw thy face and heard
thy name.

Thy father fell in battle, and the same
Stern lot beset thy brethren; but
with thee,

A little babe, thy mother secretly
Fled from her lordly castle, to abide
In the wild wood; so from thine eyes
to hide

Through all thy life the sight of arms
and war.



*h, vain indeed the dreams of mor-
tals are
Against God's will! All this as
if besel*

*We learned, and much we know not
which to tell
Is thine; but this we know from
many a sign
Vouchsafed us through that mystery
divine
Whereby we live, that in this holy
place
The blood of Eiturel, by God's high
grace
Shall ever rule; until the Grail once
more,
Its work achieved, it please Him to
restore
To Heaven, from whence it came.*



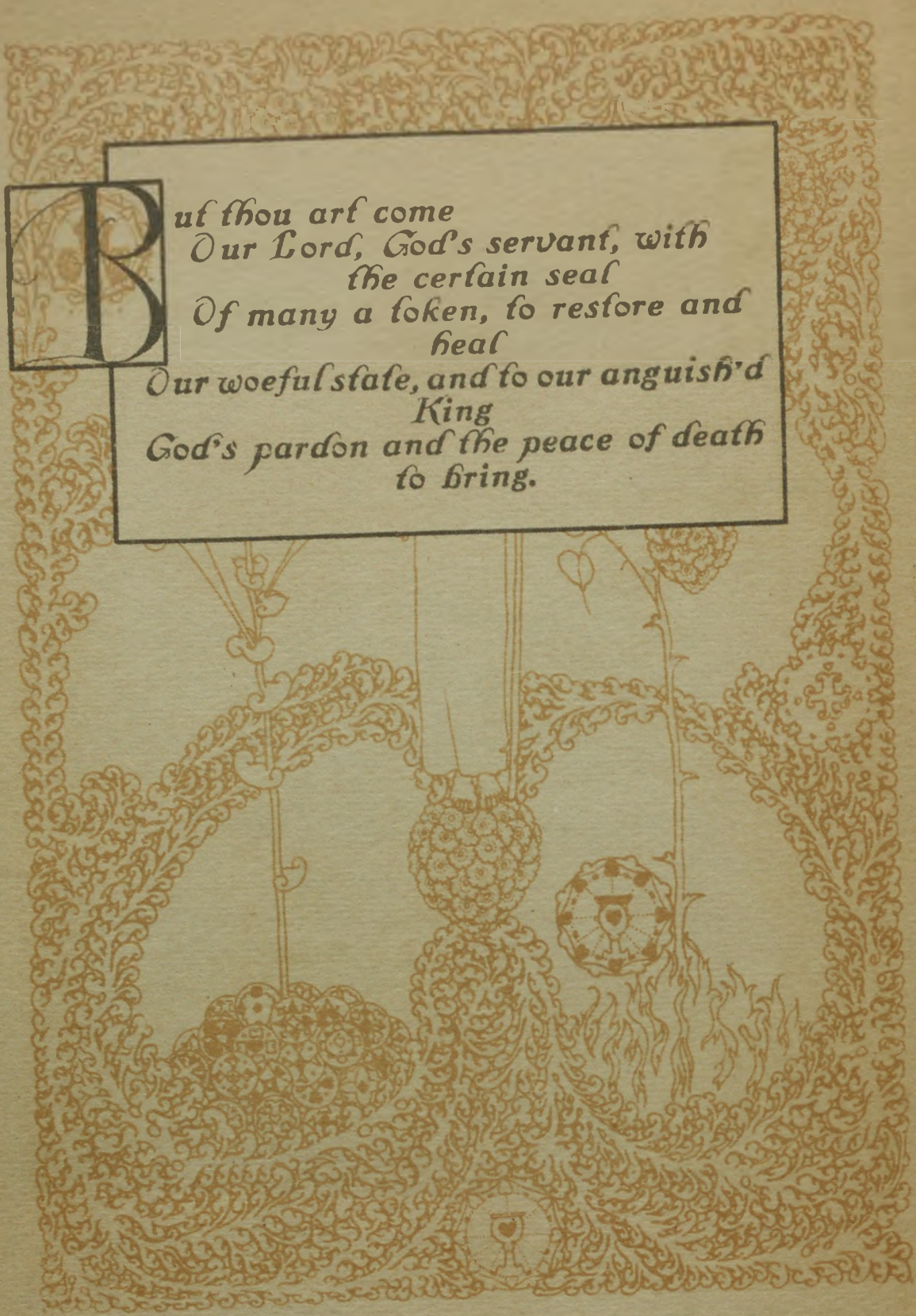


*Now thou art here
Gamuret's son, Redeemer of the
Spear,
To help us in our darkest hour;
for know
Since thou didst leave us nigh three
years ago
Thine uncle, sick with torment and
despair,
Will do no more his sacred task, and
ne'er
Hath once unveiled the Grail. And
so we ride
No more triumphant on the bound-
less tide
Of mystic life that from its presence
flowed.
Dearth and decay we know, and the
dark road
By which our Order hurries to its
doom
Too plainly do I see.*

B

*ut thou art come
Our Lord, God's servant, with
the certain seal
Of many a token, to restore and
heal*

*Our woeful state, and to our anguish'd
King
God's pardon and the peace of death
to bring.*





*Delay we not! The throne of Eifurel
Awaits its lord. I go before, to
tell
The brethren of thy coming, and
prepare
The assembly of the Order, when
with prayer
And solemn rites thou shalt be con-
secrate
To service of the Grail."*



A large, decorative initial letter 'W' in a black and white serif font, enclosed in a square frame with ornate flourishes extending from the top and bottom.

*With looks elate
The old man left them; yet in that
fair hour
Alone they were not, for the eternal
Power
That rules the vast enchantment of
the Spring
Was busy there, and wove its magic
ring
Softly, around them. Each on each
they turned
An all-revealing gaze with eyes that
burned
Through gathering tears; then for a mo-
ment fleet
They clung together, by one impulse
sweet
United, while upon the lips of each
Love trembled into half-articulate
speech,
And troth was plighted while the
world should last.*





T

*hen hand in trembling hand the
lovers passed
Beneath the oaks of Montsalvat
to gain
Their high mysterious Kingdom,
there to reign
In dim, half-heavenly glory where
the eye
Discerns the dark shapes of mortality
No more.*





*The human tale of sin and woe,
Of strife and victory, that long ago
Was rhymed and written of the
Cup and Spear*

*By many a golden pen is ended
here -*

*Ended, with all the sorrow, all the
strife,
Lost in the infinite sea of Love and
Life.*







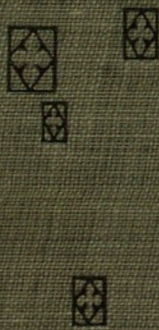
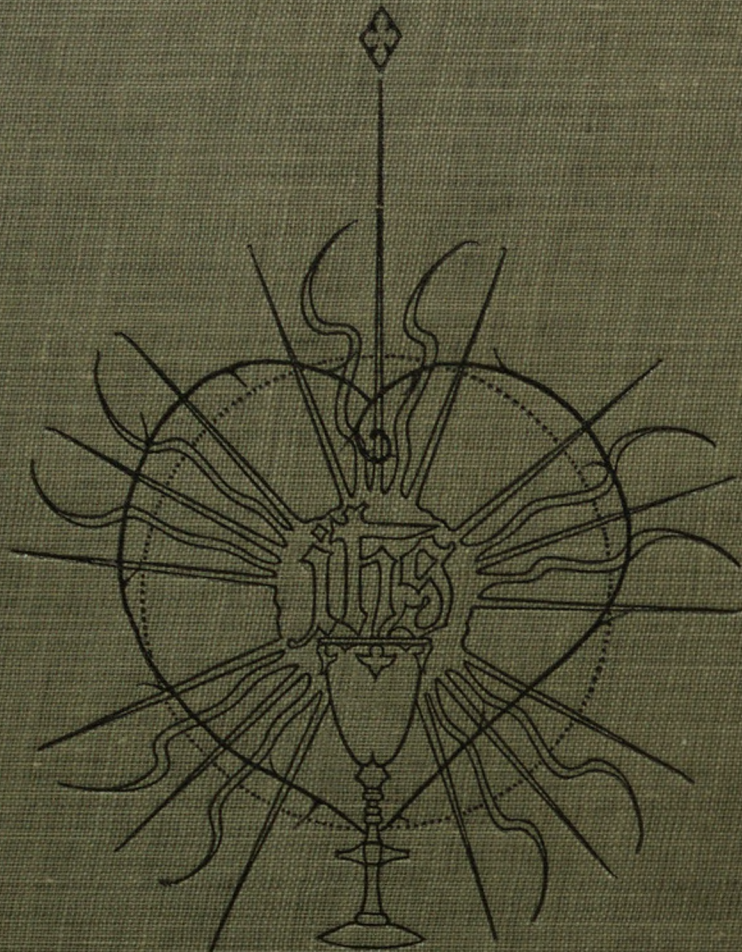


The letterpress and line illustrations lithographed by Vincent Brooks, Day and Sons Ltd. London, the four-colour plates printed by Henry Stone and Son Ltd. Banbury. A.D. MCMXII.









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