

AUGUSTE RODIN

SEVEN LITHOGRAPHS FROM THE
WATER-COLOURS OF AUGUSTE
RODIN WITH A CHAPLET OF VERSE

ALEISTER CROWLEY

RODIN IN RIME

EDITION

2 Copies on Vellum.

10 Copies on China paper. .

488 Copies on handmade paper.



7. 10. 10

SEVEN LITHOGRAPHS
BY CLOT
FROM THE WATER-COLOURS OF
AUGUSTE RODIN

WITH A CHAPLET OF VERSE BY

ALEISTER CROWLEY



LONDON: PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR AT
THE CHISWICK PRESS

1907

CHISWICK PRESS: CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND CO.
TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE, LONDON.

182, RUE DE L'UNIVERSITÉ.

MON CHER CROWLEY,

Vos poésies ont cette fleur violente, ce bon sens,
et cette ironie qui en soit inattendue.

C'est d'un charme puissant et cela ressemble a une
attaque bienfaisante.

Votre poésie est donc violente, et me plait par ce
côté aussi.

Je suis honoré que vous m'ayiez pris mes dessins
et ainsi honoré dans votre livre.

Votre AUG. RODIN.

BALZAC

GIGANTESQUE, enténébré de fer noir,
Emmoufflé, Balzac se dresse, et voit.—L'immense
Dédain,

Le Silence égyptiaque, la Maîtrise des Douleurs,
Le Rire de Gargantua secoue ou pacifie
La stature ardente du Maître, vivide. Au loin, épouvanté,
L'air frémit sur toute sa chair. En vain
L'Incarné de la Comédie Humaine
Enfonce aux orbites ombreux l'irradiation géniale de ses
prunelles.

Epithalames, Péans de naissances, Epitaphes
S'inscrivent au mystère de ses lèvres.
La triste Sagesse, la Honte méprisante, l'Agonie profonde,
Gisent aux plis du manteau, pans de montagne et faces
de cercueil.

—Et la Pitié s'est blottie au cœur.

L'âpre science etreint
L'essentielle virilité. Balzac se dresse, et rit.

Traduit par MARCEL SCHWOB.

RODIN

UN homme.—Spectacle de l'Univers,
L'Œuvre se dresse et affronte la Nature: percep-
tion et mélange

Au seul centre silencieux d'une âme magistrale
De la Force égyptienne, de la Simplicité grecque,
De la Subtilité celte.—Libéré par la souffrance
Le grand courage calme de l'Art Futur, raffiné
En sa nerveuse majesté, glisse, profond,
Sous la beauté de chaque rayon d'harmonie.

Titan! Les Siècles amoindris s'enfoncent,
S'enfoncent à l'horizon des contemplations.

Debout, et lève
D'un ferme poing la coupe suprême, le Zodiaque!
Là écume son vin—essence de l'Art Eternel—la Vérité!
Bois, bois à la toute puissante santé, au Temps rajeuni!
—Salut, Auguste Rodin! Vous êtes un homme!

Traduit par MARCEL SCHWOB.

PARIS, février 1903.

DEDICATION

NOR I can give, nor you can take; endures
The simple truth of me that this is yours.
Is not the music mingled with the form
When all the heavens break in blind black storm?
Are we not veiled as Gods, and cruel as they,
Smiting our brilliance on the shuddering clay?
Silence and darkness cover us, confirm
Our splendour to its unappointed term:
For all the mean homunculi that dance
Around us wither at our brilliance.
These puppets perish in the good grand glare,
Our sworded sunlight in the boundless air!
These bats need cloisters; these tame birds a cage;
How should they know the Masters of the Age?
Or understand when the archangels cry
Adoring us “Ἐλλῆν κατ’ ἀστέρ’ εἶ” ?

60, JERMYN STREET, S.W.
16.4.07

EDITORIAL NOTE

B

AUGUSTE RODIN AND THE NOMENCLATURE OF HIS WORKS

A STUDY IN SPITE

WHEN legitimate criticism is met with a smart swing on the point of the jaw, and has subsided into an unpleasant and unpitiful heap; when its high-well-born brother has shaken hands—not without many years of friendly sparring—with the new pugilist, all his family are very disappointed, for Society takes no notice of them in its (to them unseemly) adulation of the rising star. Their unfraternal feeling may even lead them to employ a sandbagger and a dark night to rid them of this dreamer Joseph.

In the case of the success, in the heavy weights, of the Meudon Chicken (M. Rodin will forgive us for the lengths to which we carry our analogy), envy has given up hope even of sandbags, and is now engaged in the ridiculous task of attempting to disconcert the eye of the Fancy Boy by flipping paper pellets at him across the arena. They do not reach him, it is true: but as I, who happen to be sitting in a back row, admiring the

clean, scientific sequences of rib-punchers, claret-tappers, etc., etc., recently received one of these missiles in the eye, my attention was called to the disturber: I will now do my part as a law-abiding citizen and take my boot to the offender, as a warning to him and all of his kidney. I shall not mention his name: that he would enjoy: that is perhaps what he hoped. I will merely state that he is one of those unwashen and oleaginous individuals who are a kind of Mérodack-Jauneau without the Mérodack, i.e., without the gleam of intention in their work which to the lay mind redeems even the most grotesque imbecility of technique, and the most fatuous ignorance of all subjects connected or unconnected with art. By philosophy he understands "Science and Health": by poetry Lake Harris or Eric Mackay: he expects a painting to tell a pretty story or to upset a metaphysical position. His conversation is like that of Planchette: or if William Horton were vocal—— But Heaven forbid!

What he said, though parrot-talk, caught up in some fifth-rate sculptor's studio, no doubt, had so much truth in it, carefully concealed by the lying misinterpretation he had put on it, that, as I said, the pellet hit me. This was what it came to. Rodin's works, it is said, *mean* nothing. He makes a study: people see it in his studio: A. goes up and says to the Master: "Ah, how beautiful, etc., *ad nauseam*—"I suppose it is 'Earth and the Spring.'" B. follows, and suggests "Hercules and Cacus"; C. thinks "The Birth of a Flower"; D. calls it "Despair"; E. varies

it with "Moses breaking the Tables of the Law"; F. cocks his eye warily, and asks if it is not meant for "Mary Magdalene"; G. votes for "The Beetle-Crusher and his Muse," and so on, day after day, till Z. comes round and recognizes it for Balzac. Rodin shakes him warmly by both hands: Balzac it is for all time—and one ceases to wonder that it was rejected!

Now, of course, this paper pellet is in any case very wide of its mark. Rodin can easily sculp himself a tabernacle and go in with Whistler—and even drag in Velasquez: but here am I illustrating, however feebly, the Works, ~~in~~ Poetry: and poetry cannot, unfortunately, ever be pure technique. I have long wished to write "A Sonnet in W. and P." (with Whip as the keynote); a triolet in U. and K.; an ode in S. Sh. Sw. Sp. and Str.—and so on; but people would merely say "Nonsense Verses" (so they do now, some of them!). So that my work is liable to the most vital misinterpretation. My best friend tells the utterly false, utterly funny story about me that I wrote one sonnet for "L'Ange déchu" and another for "Fille d'Icare."

The real heart of the attack is, of course, against Rodin's intention, and it is my object to show what rubbish it is, even granting the literary basis of criticism to be valid. I am given to understand that something of the sort described above does sometimes take place in the naming of a statue (of the allegorical description especially). But that is a question of felicity, of epigram; never of subject.

In "La Main de Dieu," for example, the meaning is obvious, and not to be wrested or distorted. What does it matter if we call it as at present, or

- (a) The Hand of Creation,
- (b) The First Lovers,
- (c) The Security of Love,
- (d) The Invisible Guard

—anything in reason? These are only ways of looking at one idea, and as you are theologian, poet, lover or mystic, so you will choose. And it is the Master's merit, not his fault, if his conception is so broad-based as to admit of different interpretations. The phenomenon is possible because Rodin is the master and not the slave of his colossal technique. The difficulty of naming a masterpiece is perhaps harder work than producing it, and Rodin being a sculptor and not an illicit epigram distiller, is perfectly justified in picking up what he can from the witty and gifted people who throng his studio as much as he will let them.

Let there be an end, then, not to the sordid and snarling jealousy which greatness must inevitably excite, not to the simian tooth-grindings which must always accompany the entrance of a man into the jungle, but to this peculiarly senseless and sidelong attack. One accepts the lion as a worthy antagonist; one can enjoy playing with a fine dog; one can sympathize with sincere and honourable labour, though it be in vain; one ignores laughingly the attack of tiny and infuriated puppies; but there are insects so loathsome, so incredibly

disgusting, worms whose sight is such an abomination, whose stink is so crapulous and purulent, that, ignoring their malignity, but simply aware of their detestable presence, the heel is ground down in one generous impulse, and the slimy thing is no more. Decomposition, already far advanced, may be trusted speedily to resolve the remains into the ultimate dust of things, mere matter for some new and hopefuller avatar.

Such a worm are you, M. D——, who once, as above described, voided your noxious nastiness in my presence, trusting to conciliate me by the intended compliment ~~that~~ my poems on Rodin were from myself and not from him, and that any other statues would have done as well.

I am as little susceptible to flattery as I am to the venomous dicta of spite and envy, and I resent that when I see it employed as the medium for this. Without your compliment, M. D——, I might have left you to crawl on, lord of your own muck-heap; with it, I take this opportunity of stamping on you.

NOTE.—I had intended to include reproductions of photographs of those few statues which I have written upon; but I prefer to pay my readers the compliment of supposing that they possess the originals in either bronze or marble.

RODIN IN RIME

FRONTISPIECE

RODIN

HERE is a man! For all the world to see
His work stands, shaming Nature. Clutched, combined
In the sole still centre of a master-mind,
The Egyptian force, the Greek simplicity,
The Celtic subtlety. Through suffering free,
The calm great courage of new art, refined
In nervous majesty, indwells behind
The beauty of each radiant harmony.

Titan! the little centuries drop back,
Back from the contemplation. Stand and span
With one great grip his cup, the Zodiac!
Distil from all time's art his wine, the truth!
Drink, drink the mighty health—an age's youth—
Salut, Auguste Rodin! Here is a man.

VARIOUS MEASURES

THE TOWER OF TOIL

(LA TOUR DE TRAVAIL)

THE old sun rolls; the old earth spins;
Incessant labour bends the stars.
Hath not enough of woes and sins
Passed? Who shall efface their senseless scars?
One makes, one mars. The aeons foil
All purpose; rise, O Tower of Toil.

Rise in thy radiance to proclaim
The agony of the earth alive!
Stand by the sea, a marble flame,
A lighthouse wedded to an hive!
Still upward strive! O tower, arise
An endless spiral to the skies!

Stand on the weather-beaten coast
A flaming angel in the noon;
A silver, fascinated ghost
In midnight's revel with the moon;
In silent swoon be still! the spoil
Of years is thine, O Tower of Toil.

Let day, a glowing vigour, male;
And night, a virgin bowed and curled,
Stand at the foot; their ardours pale
Systole and diastole of the world!
With life impearled (their eyes absorb)
They visibly sustain the orb.

Then let the tower in seven tiers
Rise in its splendour marmorean,
Unite the chill divided years
In plain perception of the æon.
Cry clear the pæan! Its tunes recoil
About thy flanks, O Tower of Toil.

Below be miners fashioned fair,
And all that labour in the sea
Sepulchred from the ambient air,
A fatal weird of dole to dree.
No time to be, no light to live,
Earth's need to these hath hope to give.

Above be various shapes of labour,
The bodily strength, the manual skill;
They shape the anvil and the sabre,
The ploughshare and the bolt; they fill
The myriad will of brains that boil:
Their fame be thine, O Tower of Toil!

Here set the travailers of land;
Here the young shepherd, fluteless now;
The mariner with tarry hand;
The clerk, with pale and foolish brow,
His brain bought cheap for brainless grind:
The bloodless martyr of the mind!

Grow up the grades, O godlike hand,
Rodin, most rightly named "August"!
Thy splendid sons and daughters stand
Obedient to the master "must."
The decadent dust thy spells assoil;
Death lives in this, thy Tower of Toil.

Grow up the grades! record the tasks
These arduous phantoms have achieved!
The growth of mind to mortals asks
A power not swift to be believed.
What bosoms heaved ere Nature's age
From monkey-man deduced the sage!

So be thy spiral tower the type
Of higher convolutions drawn
From hunger's woe and murder's gripe
And lust's revulsion to the dawn
Of days that spawn on holier soil
Thy loftier sons, O Tower of Toil.

There is a flower of native light
That springs eternal on the earth.
Carve us, O master-hand, aright
That ecstasy of pain and mirth,
A baby's birth! That prize of fear
Engrave upon the loftiest tier!

Nor in the solitary woe
(The silent, the unwitting strain)
Forget the miracles that grow
In the austere ordered brain!
Darwin and Taine, Descartes and Boyle,
Inscribe thou on the Tower of Toil!

Those who have striven to limn the mind,
Paint, model, tune, or hymn the light,
Their vision of the world refined
By mastery of superior sight:
Honour their might! the gain have these
Of all men's woes and ecstasies!

High soul; no benediction seek
From any spirit but our own!
Crown not the mighty with the weak!
The Tower be a Tower, and not a Throne!
In man-carved stone the endless coil
Arise untopped, the Tower of Toil!

Deem not that prayer or sacrifice
Will ever cause the work to end!
Serene, sufficient, let it rise
Alone; it doth not ask a friend,
Nor shall it bend a fatuous knee
To a fantastic deity.

What crest or chrism were so good
To work as Art, the crown upon
Work's brow? Thy will with love endued
Lift up this loftier Parthenon!
Thine art the consecrative oil
To hallow us the Tower of Toil!

LA BELLE HEAULMIERE

AGE and despair, poverty and distress
Bend down the head that once was blithe and fair.
Embattled toward the ancient armouress
Age and despair!

Where is the force of youth? The beauty where?
What two-edged memory of some lost caress
Lurks in the sorrowful pose and lingers there?

O melancholy mother! Sorceress,
No more enchantress! What the harvest rare
Sprung from the seed of youth and happiness?
Age and despair.



1/10/20

FEMME ACCROUPIE

SWIFT and subtle and thin are the arrows of Art:
I strike through the gold of the skin to the gold of the heart.
As you sit there mighty in bronze I adore the twist
Of the miracle ankle gripped by the miracle wrist.
I adore the agony-lipped and the tilted head,
And I pay black orisons to the breasts aspread
In multiple mutable motion, whose soul is hid.
And the toils of confused emotion the Master bid
Lurk in the turn of the torso for poets to see
Is hid from the lesser and dull—hidden from me.
She squats, and is void and null; I know her not;
As God is above, but more so, she sits, to blot
Intelligence out of my brain, conceit from my ken;
And I class myself, idle and vain, with the newspaper men.

CARYATIDE

SHALL beauty avail thee, Caryatid, crouched, crushed
by the weight of a world of woe?

By birthright the burden is thine: on thy shoulders the
sorrow hath slid

From the hand of the Healer: behold, in the steady,
continuous throe,

Shall beauty avail thee, Caryatid?

Thou wast proud of thy beauty: the burden of beauty was
hid

From thy eyes: how is't now with thee, now? By the
sweat dropping slow

From the brows of thy anguish, we see what the weight
of it did

To the patient despair of the brain. Shall no God strike
a blow?

Shall no hero be found the unbearable burden to rid?

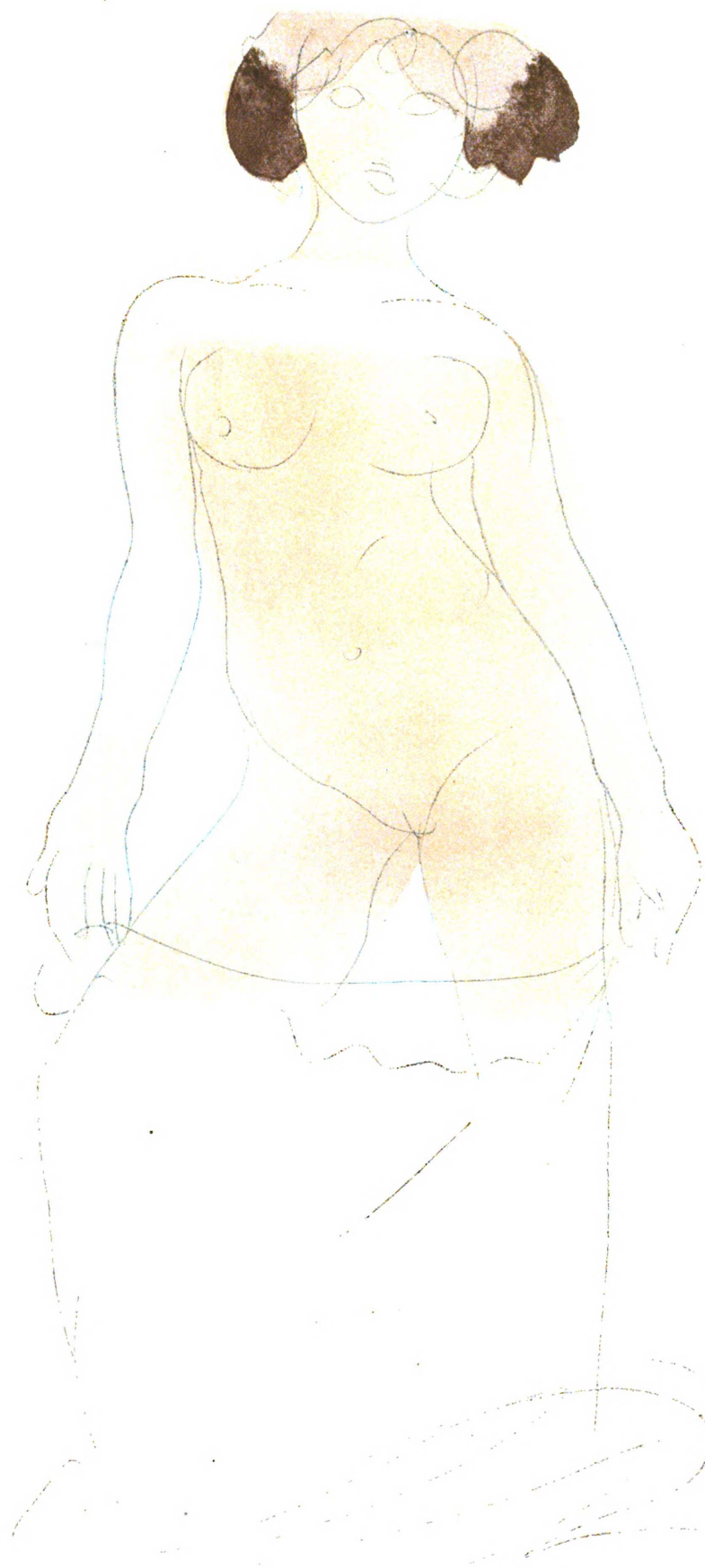
And if these be extinct—'tis a fiend that laughs eager
and low:

“Shall beauty avail thee, Caryatid?”

JEUNE MERE

SURELY the secret whisper of sweet life
Shakes in the shell-ear murmurous memories
Of the old wonder of young ecstasies
In the first hours when the white word of wife
She won so hardly out of dark wild strife
And mystery of peace; thine utter ease,
Abandoned rapture! Caught and cut by seas
Of sudden wisdom, stinging as a knife
Swift struck sets all the blood a-tingle. Woe!
What wakes within? What holiest intimation
Of intimate knowledge of the lords of nature?
She sees her fate smile out on her, doth know
Her weird of womanhood, her noble station
Among the stars and ages; and her stature
Soars o'er the system; so the scarred misfeature
Of death avails her for the isolation
Of high things ever holy; this the throe
Of swiftly-comprehended motherhood
Once taught her. Now the whisper of the child
Bids her be great, who was supremely good.

For, mark you! babes are ware of wiser things,
And hold more arcane matters in their mild
Cabochon eyes than men are ware of yet.
Therefore have poets, lest they should forget,
Likened the little sages unto kings.
But look! the baby whispers—hush! Nay! nay!
We shall disturb them loving—come away!



L'AMOUR QUI PASSE

LOVE comes to flit, a spark of steel
Struck on the flint of youth and wit;
Ay, little maid, for woe or weal,
Love comes to flit.

Hermes one whisper thrills. Admit!
Kupris one smile aims—do you feel?
Eros one arrow—has he hit?

Why do you sit there immobile?
A spark extinct is not relit.
Beyond resource, above appeal,
Love comes to flit.

TETE DE FEMME

(MUSEE DU LUXEMBOURG)

IT shall be said, when all is done,
The last line written, the last mountain
Climbed, the last look upon the sun
Taken, the last star in the fountain
Shattered, that you and I were one.

What shall they say, who come apace
After us, heedless, gallant? Seeing
Our statues, hearing of our race
Heroic tales, half-doubted, being
So far beyond a rime to trace.

What shall they say? For secret we
Have held our love, and holy. Splendour
Of light, and music of the sea
And eyes and heart serene and tender,
With kisses mingled utterly.

These were our ways. And who shall know?
What warrior bard our nuptial glories
Shall sing? Historic shall we go
Down through our country's golden stories?
Shall lovers whisper "Even so

As he loved her do I love you"?
So much they shall know, surely; never
The truth, how lofty and fresh as dew
Our love began, abode for ever:
They cannot know us through and through.

We have exceeded all the past.
The future shall not build another.
This is the climax, first and last.
We stand upon the summit. Mother
Of ages, daughter of ages, cast

The fatal die, and turn to death!
Let evolution turn, involving
As when the gray sun sickeneth—
Ghostly September! so dissolving
Into the pale eternal breath.

When all is done, shall this be said.
When all is said, shall this be done,
The aeon exhaust and finishéd,
And slumber steal upon the sun,
My dear, when you and I are dead.

LA CASQUE D'OR

A NINA OLIVIER

YOU laughing little light of wickedness, low ripples
 round you love and coils
And twists the Casque of Gold about the child-face with
 a child-caress.
O glory of the tangled net! O subtle vase of scented oils!
You laughing little light of wickedness!

Through all the misty wind of light that glammers round
 you, sorceress,
Your face shines out with feline grace, exults, a tiger in
 the toils!
They shall not hold your passion in: fling, fling your lips,
 my murderess,

On mine that I may pass away, a vapour that your passion
 boils,
A rose whose petals flutter down as cruel lips and fingers
 press.
Hear one last careless laugh acclaim my corpse the latest
 of your spoils,
You laughing little light of wickedness.

LES BOURGEOIS DE CALAIS

PERFECTLY sad and perfectly resolved,
They are ready, ready to be hanged. They go
(Forlorn ones!) against Calais' overthrow;
And all their fate in Calais' is involved
Unto the utmost. Who will save his folk
From vengeful ire of the tyrant? Six are these,
Perfectly sad, and steady, and at ease.
Self-slain, they shall save others from the yoke.
Seven then are these found faithful unto death;
From Calais six; and one from Nazareth.

REVEIL D'ADONIS¹

A DONIS, awake, it is day; it is spring!
It is dawn on the lea, it is light on the lake!
The fawn's in the bush and the bird's on the wing!
Adonis, awake!

Adonis, awake! We are colour and song
And form, we are Muses most tender to take
Thy life up to Art that was lost over long.
Adonis, awake!

Adonis, awake! thou hast risen above
The fear in the forest, the brute in the brake.
Thou art sacred to shrines that are higher than Love!
Adonis, awake!

¹ Properly the sequel to *Mort d'Adonis* on p. 62.

LA MAIN DE DIEU

THE Hand. From mystery that is cloud control
The mystery that is emptiness of air
Purpose and power. What blossom do they bear?
Stability and strength inform—what soul?

*Turn to me, love! the banks of air are soft.
Turn to me, love! the skies are blue,
Fleeced with the clouds that hang aloft,
Buds that may blossom into dew.*

*Turn to me, love! lie close and breathe
The smooth waves of the wind!
The zephyr in thy locks I'll wreath,
The breeze entwined.*

*We are so safe; so happy we:
Our love can never falter; fate can never close
Hard on the flower of land and sea.
Lift, O rose petals of my rose,
Toward me, rest, dream on, we are here, we love.
There is no shadow above,
No ghost below: we are here. Kiss! Kiss!
For ever. Who would have believed, have thought
of this?*

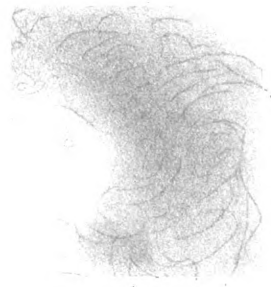
Outside is nothing. Let what will uproll,
Within all's certain. Are we not aware
(Who see the hand) what brain must know—and care?
What wisdom formed the racers, find a goal?

Careless and confident, let us love on.
Life, one or many, rises from a seed,
Sprouts, blooms, bears fruit, and then is gone—is gone.
Let go the future, ominous and vast!
Loose the bound mind from the unavailing past!
Live, love for ever, now, in every deed!

DESESPAIR

INTO the inmost agony of things
She sees, through glamour of untrusty sense,
The full corruption of omnipotence,
The infinite rage of fishes to have wings,
The lust of beasts for tentacles; caught thence
Corollary, syllogism, she strides tense
Into the inmost agony of things.

So, fearless, amid gods and evil kings,
She sits, poor wretch, eternal scientist,
Straining mild muscles, leaving to its list
The spasm-shaken body. So she flings
The teeth-set fate of Fortune's face unkissed
Against the fiat: sets her clenched fist
In his face: slides spinning with her body's twist
Into the inmost agony of things.



7/1/20

EPERVIER ET COLOMBE

WHEN, at the awful Judgment-day, God stands
Shrunk and shaking at my gaze, before
My hollow seat of agony, it may be
He shall discover me the great excuse
For an ill world ill shapen by ill hands,
For unit joy and misery ten score,
For all his work's complaint; I think that He,
Twitching His fearful fingers, may let loose
This answer: Thus a kiss I brought to being
Which by no other way were possible.
Measure, O man! Balance with eyes true seeing
If I were right or no to have made Hell!

Then would He stand forgiven—nay! acquitted!
I, as I look on this tight coil of bliss,
Swift clasp of Rodin's magical mind love-witted,
See all creation fade; abide, one kiss.
Then to my own soul's bow this shaft be fitted;
Thank God for all, seeing that all is this!

RESURRECTION

FROM youth and love to sorrow is one stride.
So to the thinker; to the lover's self
Rather it glides or swoons; the idle elf
That plucks a rose, scatters its petals wide,
Is like the wind, is like the moon-wrought tide,
Is most like life: so soft to man, so hard
To the all-gathering brain of a great bard!

Christ answered: Peace to man amid the strife!
I am the Resurrection and the Life.
Let the graves open: see the woman grip
Her goodly love, her gainful fellowship!
See the man, hungry, grasp the willing bride,
Grove through the dark dawn to her glowing side!
There is the resurrection trump: confess
The mystery of life is happiness!

Rodin discerned. We see the eagle-eyed
Glory of echoing kisses; hear the sound
Of gluttoned raptures break in the profound,
The abyss of time: upsurge the dead. Why hide
Thy sorrowful god's brow, O sculptor, mage,
Child of eternity, father of an age?

Thou hast seen, thou hast showed, that as it was on earth
So shall it be in resurrection birth.
The cycle of weariness and passionate pain
Is and was ever and must be again.
There is no death! Ah! that is misery!
For this, Lord Christ, is it that thou wouldst be,
Thou yesterday, to-day, and thou to-morrow?
The mystery of this our life is sorrow.

L'ETERNEL PRINTEMPS

I

THE eternal spring is in the heart of youth.
They are nearest to the secret of the world,
These lovers with their lithe white bodies curled
Into the rhythm of a dance; the truth
Is theirs that feel, not ours that idly see;
Theirs that inhabit, and not ours that flee
The intimate touch of love and think to sleuth
By intellect all the scent of being, whirled
In the wheel of time—roll back, slow years, and be
A monument, a memory for me;
That I may in their passion have a part,
And feel their glory glow within my heart!

II

This holy rapture is the eternal spring,
Here in the love that tunes the untrammelled feet,
Here in the ardour of the arms that cling,
The alluring amber-touch of sweet to sweet,
The ageless awe of the new love revealed,
The reverence of the new love hovering nigh;

These things are mazes flowery on the field,
Measures to trace a-dancing by-and-by.
Here in the statued pose the rhythm is sealed
That all who are human dance to evermore.
Before this ecstasy all ages yield:
Eternity breaks foamless on time's shore.
And I, because of this delight in me,
Am one in substance with eternity.

ACROBATES

MY little lady light o' limb
Twirls on her lover's twisting toes.
Lithe as a lynx, red as a rose,
She spins aloft and laughs at him.
So gay the pose, so quaint the whim,
One stares and stares: it grows and grows.
So swift the air she seems to skim
One's senses dazzle; wonder glows
Warm in one's veins like love—who knows?
One follows till one's eyes are dim
My little lady light o' limb.

L'AGE D'AIRAIN

FRESH in the savage vigour of the time,
The golden youth stands in the golden prime,
Erect, acute, astrain. We look and long
For those bronze lips to blossom into song.
He is silent. We reflect. Ourselves grown old
Yearn somewhat toward that sensuous glow of gold.

All this is folly. Rodin made him so,
Evoked the strength, the goodliness, the glow.
The form is little: in the mind there dwells
Force to avail the childish heart that swells
With aught that is. The golden prime is past—
Aye! but a nobler gain is ours at last
Who see man weary, but within our span
The perfect promise of the overman.

FAUNESSE

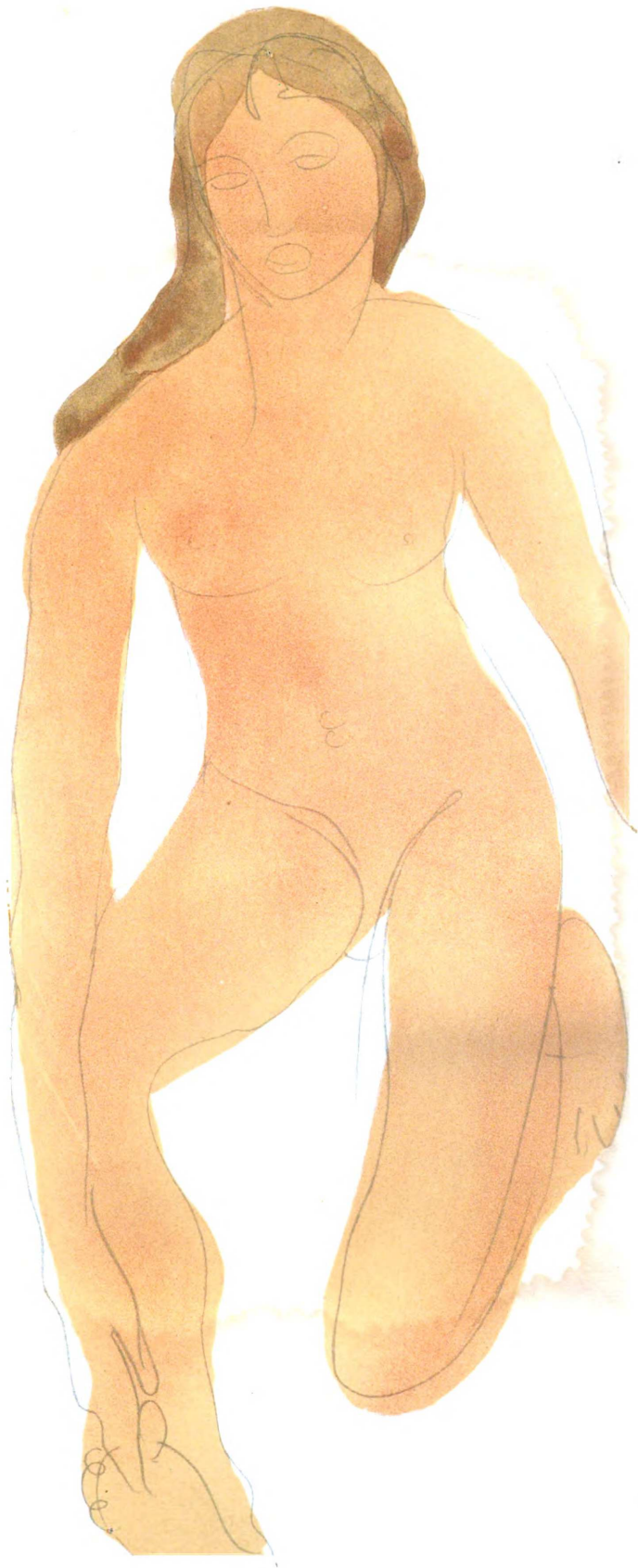
THE veil o' th' mist of the quiet wood is lifted to the
seer's gaze;
He burns athwart the murky maze beyond into beatitude.

A solemn rapture holds the faun: an holy joy sucks up
the seer
Within its rose-revolving sphere, the orient oval of the
dawn.

Light's graven old cartouche is sealed upon the forest:
groves are gray
With filtered glammers of the day, the steely ray flung off
his shield.

She kneels, yon spirit of the earth; she kneels and looks
toward the east.
In her gray eyes awakes the beast from slumber into
druid mirth.

She is amazed, she eager, she, exotic orchid of the glade!
She waits the ripe, exultant blade, life tempered by
eternity.



7/4/21

And I who witness am possessed by awe grown crimson
with desire,
Its iron image wrapped in fire and branded idly on my
breast.

Her face is bronze, her skin is green, as woods and suns
would have it so.
Her secret wonders grow and glow, limned in the luminous
patine.

Worship, the sculptor's, clean forgot in worship of her
body lithe,
And time forgotten with his scythe, and thought, the
Witenagemot.

Confused in rapture: peace is culled a flower from the
arboreal root,
The vision dulled, the singer mute, shattered the lute,
the song annulled.

SONNETS AND QUATORZAINS

MADAME RODIN

HEROIC helpmeet of the silent home!
Shall who sings Art not worship womanhood?
There is depth of calm beneath the sea's fine foam;
Behind the great there is ever found the good.
Honour and glory to the sacred house
And ark of the covenant of holy trust,
The unseen mother and the secret spouse
Ever availing in the sorrow and dust
That aye avenge the artist's victory won,
That cover up his monuments of fame,
That twist his sight, once steadfast on the sun
To the fear folded in the robes of shame:—
Lest he, to all the world plain victor, find
Himself mere failure to his own white mind.

LE PENSEUR

BLIND agony of thought! Who turns his pen
Or brush or lyre to Art, shall see in this
The symbol of his battle against men
For men, the picture of the torturing bliss
Of his necessity: sits clutched and closed
Into himself the adept of wizard thought.
Gripped in his own embrace he sits: keen-nosed
The invisible bloodhounds ache upon the slot!
Soon, soon they are on him: soon the fangs of hate,
The sharp teeth of the infinite are in him!
Shall love, or fame, or gold, those pangs abate?
What siren with smooth voice and breast shall win him?
Never a one, be sure! In serene awe
The thinker formulates eternal law.

LA PENSEE

EXQUISITE fairy, flower from stone begotten
Sprung into sudden shape of maidenhood,
Hast thou thy father's anguish all forgotten?
Hast thou a balm, who hast hardly understood?
Is not thy beauty for his comfort moulded,
Thy joy and purity his won reward?
Sweet blush of blood, pale blossom lightly folded,
To thee did he carve his way by right of sword?
Thou who art all delight to all of us,
Hast thou no special intimate caress
For him whose bloody sweat stood murderous
On the writhen brow, the bosom of distress?
Ay! for his anguish thou art gain enough—
One thought, worth all Earth's fame, and gold, and love!

LE BAISER

INFINITE delicacy in great strength
Holds the white girl and draws her into love.
All her lithe subtlety, her lovely length,
Is sealed in the embrace about, above
Her visible life. What mastery of repose,
Compulsion of motion lurks for us therein.
As we gaze back on Greece, as Nature glows,
Simple and sacred, with no thought of sin,
Yet born to trouble us, to fascinate.
Here we are, back i' th' springtime of the earth;
God above man; and above God, dire fate.
Ancient cosmogony of peace and mirth!
Careless, we careless, do invoke thy rime
Of the ancient rapture of the olden time.

BOUCHES D'ENFER

LOOK how it leaps towards the leaper's curl
Of vivid ecstasy, life loosed at last
From the long-held leash! The headlong, hot-mouthed girl
Upon her sister like a star is cast,
Pallid with death-in-life achieved. O force
Of murder animal in the dead embrace!
The implacable ardour, unavenged remorse
For time's insulting loss, quickens the pace
Unto its prey that gathers, like a storm
Shrouding invisibly the crater's rim
Whence fury yet shall wake, and fire inform
The inane basalt and coruscations dim
Of smouldering infamy. Bow down in awe!
It is enough. The Gods are at feast. Withdraw!

LA GUERRE

SHE sits and screams above the folk of peace,
Deafening their quiet ears with hideous clamour.
Abhorred and careless she bids order cease.
Her hate resolves the shriek into a stammer
Of inarticulate rage. The wounded man
Twisted in agony beneath her squirms
To hear her raucous blasphemies outspan
The grip of God at this his last of terms.
Yea! he must die with horror in his ears,
Hate in his heart. The mischief must endure.
He hath expiated naught by death. His tears,
His thoughts, these strike nor stay her not, be sure!
She is Madness, and a fury; though were gone
All life to war, she would scream on—scream on.

W. E. HENLEY

(AT WOKING)

CLOISTRAL seclusion of the galleried pines
Is mine to-day: these groves are fit for Pan—
O rich with Bacchic frenzy and his wine's
Atonement for the infinite woe of man!
Is there no God of Vital Art to dwell
Serene, enshrined, incensed, adored of us?
Were not a cemetery His citadel?
His treasure-house some barred sarcophagus?
And here his mighty and reverend high-priest
Bade me good cheer, an eager acolyte,
Poured the high wine, unveiled the mystic feast;—
Swooped the plumed anguish of inveterate night;
Devouring torture of insight shot. Night hovered;
Dawn smote. I bowed—O God declared, discovered!

SYRINX AND PAN

SYRINX is caught upon the Arcadian field.
The god's grip huddles her girl breasts: his grim
And gnarled lips grin forth the soul of him.
The imprint of his bestial heart is sealed
And stamped armorial on her virgin shield,
Fame's argent heraldry despoiled. Grows dim
For her the universe: supple and slim
She slides in vain. She loathes him—and doth yield.

Shame, sorrow, these be sire and dam of song.
Fatality, O Nature, is thy name.
Along the accurséd river, stagnant shame,
Eddying woe, from rape and godly wrong,
Springs the immortal reed: the mortal's cry
Rises, an angry anthem, to the sky.

ICARE¹

ICARUS cries: "My love is robed in light
And splendour of the summits of the sun.
Wing, O my soul, thy plumed caparison
Through ninety million miles of space beyond sight!
Utmost imagination's eagle-flight
Out-soar!" But he, by his own force undone,
His peacock pinions molten one by one,
Falls to black earth through the impassive night.

Lo! from uprushing earth arises love
Ardent and secret, scented with the night,
Amorous, ready. Sing the awakening bliss
That catches him, from the inane above
Hurled—nay, drawn down! What uttermost delight
Dawns in that death! Icarus and Gaia kiss.

¹ Called "Fille d'Icare" by the distinguished anatomists, priceless idiots, and pragmatistical precisians, who see nothing but a block of marble in this most spiritual of Rodin's masterpieces.

LA FORTUNE

“HAIL, Tyche! From the Amalthean horn
Pour forth the store of love! I lowly bend
Before thee: I invoke thee at the end
When other gods are fallen and put to scorn.
Thy foot is to my lips; my sighs unborn
Rise, touch and curl about thy heart; they spend
Pitiful love. Lovelier pity, descend
And bring me luck who am lonely and forlorn.”

Fortune sits idle on her throne. The scent
Of honeyed incense wreathes her lips with pleasure.
For pure delight of luxury she turns,
Smooth in her goddess rapture. So she spurns
And crushes the pale suppliant. Softly bent,
Her body laughs in ecstasy of leisure.

PAOLO ET FRANCESCA

PAOLO ignites, Francesca is consumed.
Loosened she lies, and breathes great gasps of love;
He, like an hunter, hungers, leaps above,
Attains, exults, despairs. This love is doomed,
Were there no hell. In granite walls entombed
Lies the true spirit and the soul thereof.
The body is here—yet is it not enough,
These litanies unchanted, unperfumed?

Live in the shuddering marble they remain:
Here is the infinite credo of pure pain.
Here let life's agony take hold enough
Of all that lives: let partial tears for them
Wake knowledge, brain-dissolving diadem
Of white-hot woe upon the brows of love!

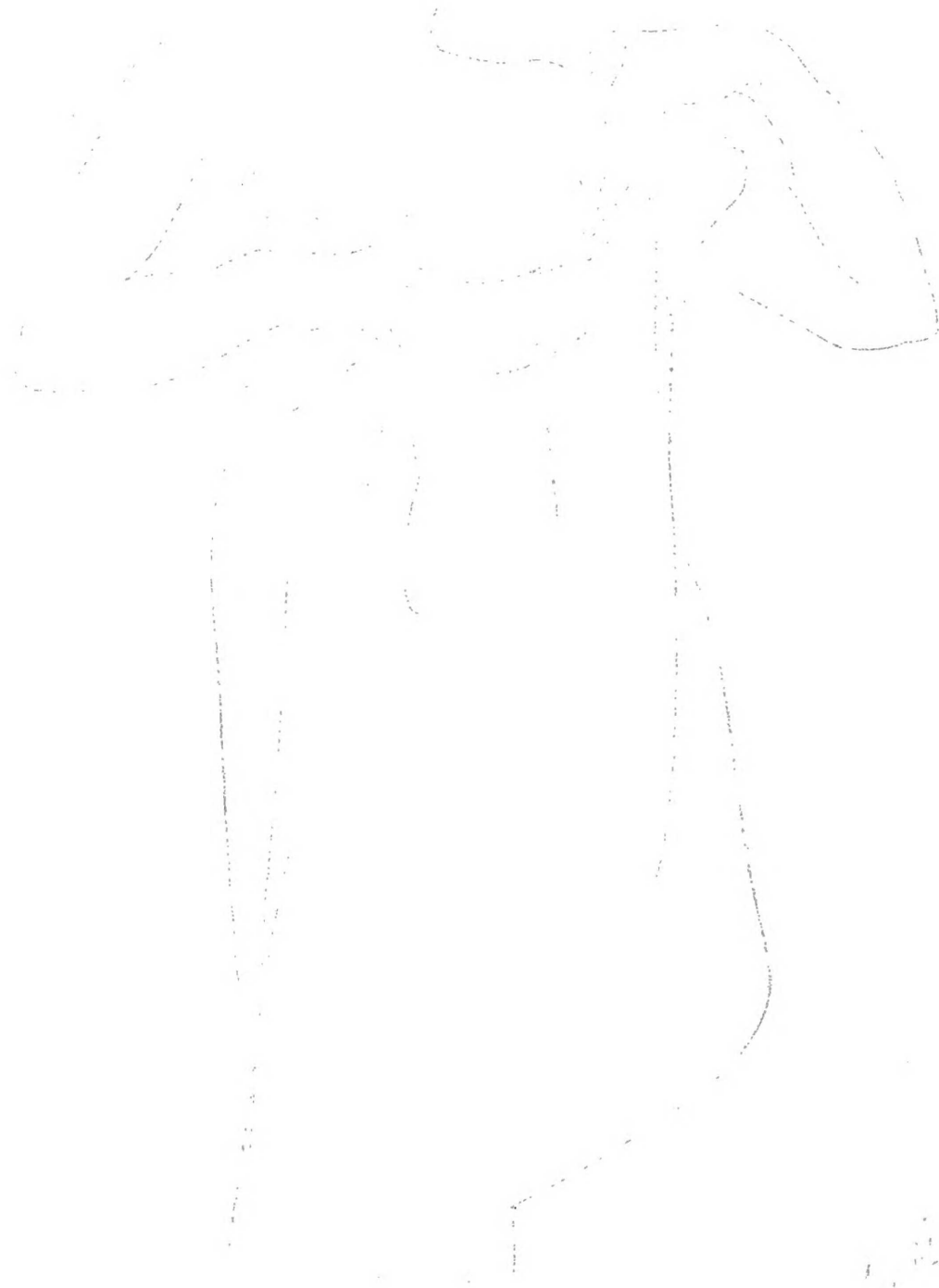
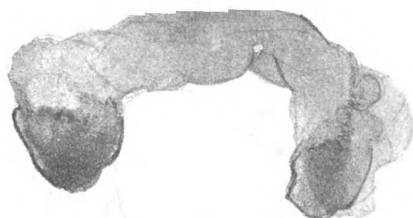
LES DEUX GENIES

GOOD bends and breathes into the rosy shell
Of peace and perfume, love in idleness,
Of pure cold raptures, hymns the mystic stress,
Imagining's reiterate miracle.

Evil breathes, bending, the reverberate spell,
Conjuring ghosts of the insane address
Of agony lurid in the damned caress,
Exulting tortures of the heart of hell.

The maiden sits and listens, smiles. Her breath
Is easy; over her bowed head fall deep
Glowing cascades of hair; she combs her hair

With subtle ecstasy, electric sweep
Of unimaginable joy; let life and death
Pass; she will comb, and comb, and will not care.



LA CRUCHE CASSEE

THE waterpot is broken at the well.
Forth rush the waters, bubbling from the brim,
Curling and coiling round the riven rim,
Lost beyond hope; and she, her sighs upswell,
And sorrow shakes her: shame's oblivious hell
Burns round her body: in her eyes there swim
Tears of deep joy, deep anguish; love's first hymn
Is choral in her ear's young miracle.

She knows the utmost now: what waters white
She held from heaven's crystal fountains; flight
Of what celestial birds struck down:—Ah me!
What god or demigod hath struck remorse
Into that close-crouched, cold, and desolate corse,
Wailing her violate virginity?

LA TENTATION DE SAINT-ANTOINE

IN mystic dolour wrapt, the ascetic turns
His vague untutored thought to love, and sees
Himself exalted at the amber knees
Of God the Father: his bowed forehead burns
With chastity's white star: no spirit yearns
More keenly from the abyss; yet, God! are these
Subtle star-sparks of spirit chastity's?
These deep-set shiverings saint nor sage discerns?

Laughter and love are over him, entice
His life to sweeter scent of sacrifice.
She knows God's will, not he! Her ardour licks
Flowers from the dust. O fool! that, heavy of breath,
Dost rot in worship at the shrine of death!
O mystic rapture of the crucifix!

EVE

THE serpent glimmered through the primal tree,
Full in the gladness of the afterglow;
Its royal head warred ever to and fro,
Seeking the knowledge of the doom to be.
Eve, in the naked love and liberty
She had not bartered yet, moved sad and slow,
Serene toward the sunset, murmuring low
The tyrant's curse, the hideous decree.

Then she, instructed by the Saviour Snake,
Saw once clear Truth and gave her life, and love,
And peace, and favour of the fiend above,
For Knowledge, Knowledge pure for Knowledge' sake.
The full moon rose. Creation's voice was dumb
For the first woman's shame, strength, martyrdom.

FEMMES DAMNEES

KISS me, O sister, kiss me down to death!
The purple of the passionate hour is flaked
With notes of gold: there swim desires unslaked,
Impossible raptures of expostulate breath.
The marble heaves with longing; hungereth
The mouth half-open for the unawaked
Mouth of the baby blossom, where there ached
Never till now the parched sweet song that saith:

“Ah! through the grace of languor and the glow
Of form steals sunset flaming on the snow!
Darkness shall follow as love wakeneth
In moonlight, and the flower, chaste love, now bloom
First in the bosom, after in the tomb—
Kiss me, O sister, kiss me down to death!”



NABUCHADNOSOR

SENSELESS the eyes: the brow bereft of sense.
Hunger is on the throne of pride; and naught
Fills the gray battlefield of ancient thought,
The market places of intelligence,
Save need and greed; whose royal words incense
The jealous God of Israel is distraught.
No jewels in the casket nobly wrought.
The shrine is grand; the god is ravished thence.

On clawing hands and hardened knees the King
Exists, no more; is it a little thing?
King Demos, hear my parable! We pass,
We poets, see you grovel at our feet,
Despise our love, and tender flesh, and wheat,
Clamour for lust, and carrion, and grass.

MORT D'ADONIS

A DONIS dies. (Imagination hears
The hoarse harsh breathing of the ill-nurtured boar)
Venus bends low, half mother and half whore,
Whole murderess of boy's budhood. Fall, black fears!

Ay! through her widowed, her unwedded tears,
The foolish filial appeal, "Restore,
O Father Zeus, this tender life once more!"
Falls the baulked hope of half a million years.

She in her gloom and ignorance will go
Forlorn to Paphos, wrapt in urgent woe,
Her hair funereal swathing her fallen form,
Its wind-swept horror holding him; his white
Torn body blushing through tempestuous night.
So breaks the life in hell, the year in storm.

BALZAC

G IANT, with iron secrecies ennighted,
Cloaked, Balzac stands and sees. Immense disdain,
Egyptian silence, mastery of pain,
Gargantuan laughter, shake or still the ignited
Stature of the Master, vivid. Far, affrighted,
The stunned air shudders on the skin. In vain
The Master of "La Comédie Humaine"
Shadows the deep-set eyes, genius-lighted.

Epithalamia, birth-songs, epitaphs,
Are written in the mystery of his lips.
Sad wisdom, scornful shame, grand agony
In the coffin-folds of the cloak, scarred mountains, lie,
And pity hides i' th' heart. Grim knowledge grips
The essential manhood. Balzac stands, and laughs.

LE CYCLOPS SURPREND ACIS ET GALATHEE

COILED in the hollow of the rock they kiss,
Rolled in one sphere of rapture; looks intense
With love, and laughter shapen of innocence!
They cling, and close, and overhang the abyss.

But over them! What monster, then, is this
Crouched for his spring, gross muscles nude and tense,
Bulged eyeballs ready for the rape, immense
In hate, the imminent spectre? He it is,

The Cyclops. Ay! thought Zeus, and what of that?
Were it not well for love, in red rough maw
Swift crunched, to expiate my eldest law?

Better, far better thus. True love lies flat,
A weary plain beyond the single peak.
I then will pity them. I will not speak.

OCTAVE MIRBEAU

BRUTAL refinement of deep-seated vice
Carves the coarse features in a sentient mould.
The gardens,¹ that were soft with flowers and gold
And sickening with murder of lust to entice
The insane to filthier raptures, carrion spice
Of ordure for perfume, bloom there, fixed bold
By the calm of the Master, god-like to behold
The horror with firm chisel and glance of ice.

Ay! and the petty and the sordid soul,
A servile whore's deformed debauchery,²
Grins from the image. Let posterity
From Rodin's art guess Mirbeau's heart, extol
The lethal chamber men ere then will find
For the pimp's pen and the corrupted mind.

¹ Le jardin des supplices, par Octave Mirbeau.

² Les mémoires d'une femme de chambre, par Octave Mirbeau.

SOCRATE

(L'HOMME AU NEZ CASSE)

CONSUMMATE beauty built of ugliness,
O broken-nose philosopher, is thine.
Diamonds are deepest in the blue-mud mine;
So is the secret of thy strong success
Daemonic-glittering through the wear and stress
Of tortured feature; virtue's soul doth shine,
Genius and wisdom in the force divine
That fills thy face; magnificence! no less.

Ay! thou shalt drink the hemlock; thou shalt suffer
And die for self respect, for love of others!
To-day are men indissolubly brothers?
Is my life smoother than the Greek's or rougher?
The Greek at least shall stead me in my craft.
Crucify Crowley! Nay, my friends! the draught.

COLOPHON

AN INCIDENT

(RUE DE L'UNIVERSITE, 182)

SPELL-BOUND we sat: the vivid violin
Wailed, pleaded, waited, triumphed. Kingly note
By note imperial from its passionate throat
Vibrates: the shadows fall like pauses in
The workshop of the Master: where there spin
Phrases in marble: fancies fall or float,
Passions exult, despairs abound, loves dote,
Thoughts gallop or abide: and prayer is sin.

Spell-bound we sat: one, young, eagerly moves.
One sits in thought: one listens, dreams, and loves.
One, critical, approves with conscious nod.
But I abode without the spell; saw these—
Diverse harmonies of identical keys!—
And these were thus: but Rodin heard like God.



CHISWICK PRESS: CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND CO.
TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE, LONDON.

