

Gammhäuser



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Tannhäuser



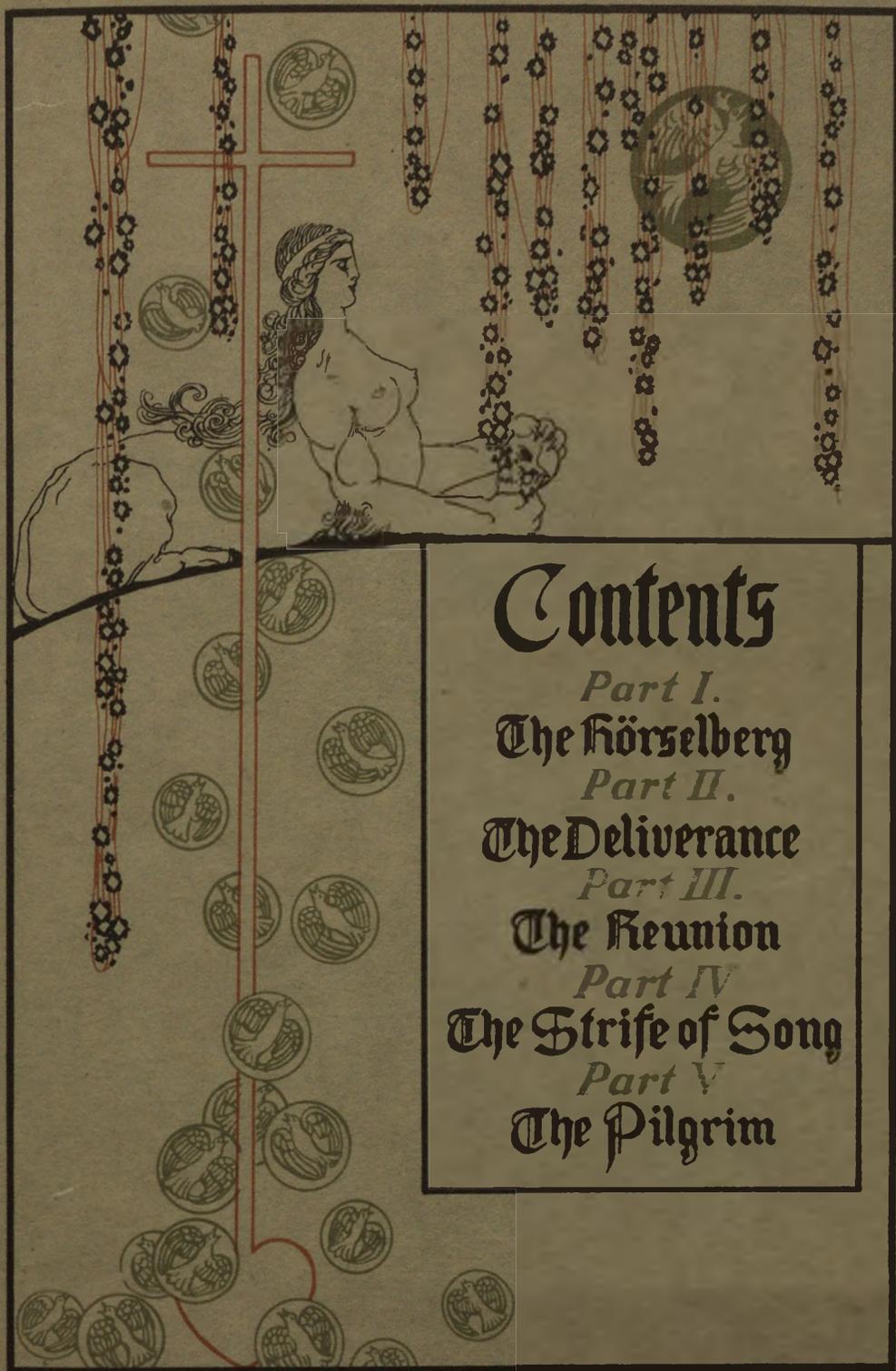




Tannhäuser
A Dramatic Poem
By Richard Wagner
Freely Translated
In Poetic Narrative Form
By E. W. Rolleston
Presented by Willy Pogany
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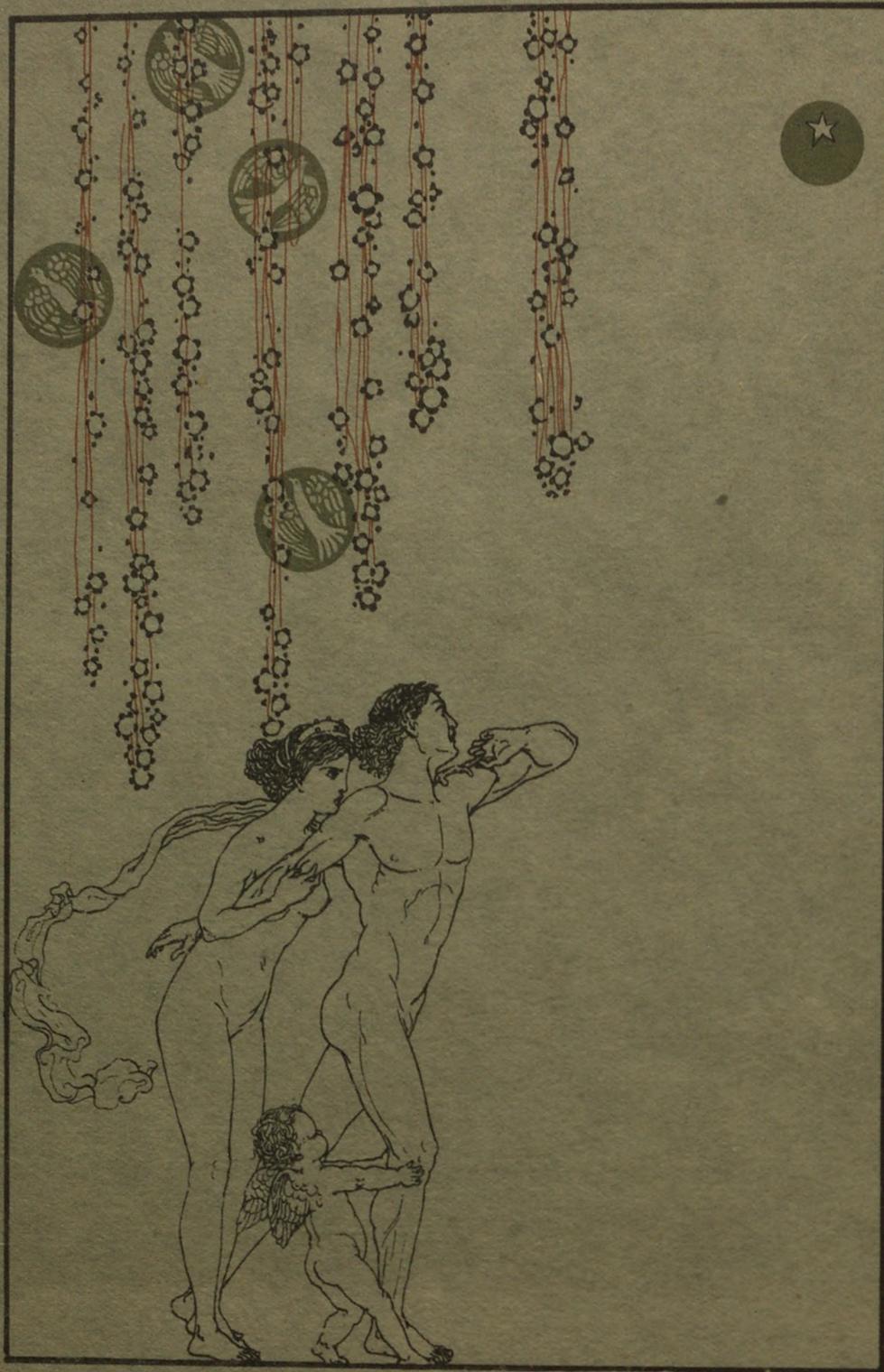
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Part I The Hörzelberg.





Dead are the Gods of Greece
this many a day.

Yet near a thousand years
ago, when yet

The pagan heart of man
seemed but half tamed,

'Tis said that in Thuringian
woods, among

The grey crags of the Hürselberg, there
dwells

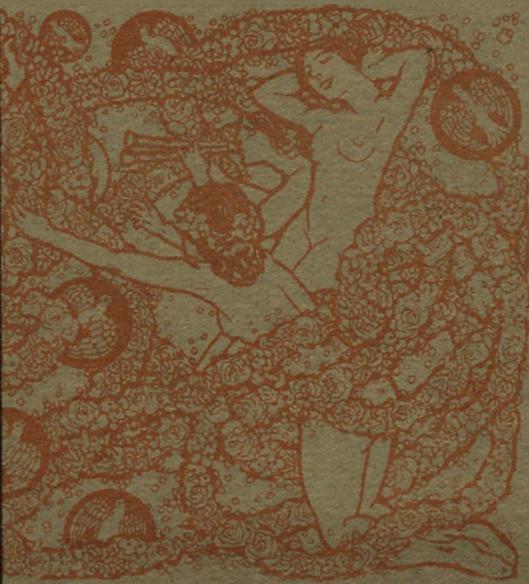
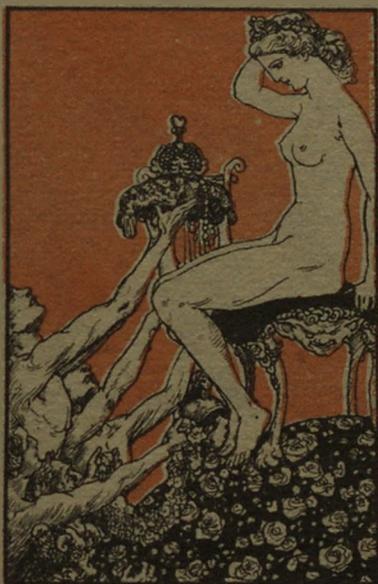
A creature fair and fearful, whom men
deem

To be the Goddess of unholy love—

A Goddess once— a Demon now—
yet graced

Still with the witchery of woman-
hood,

And mighty with the spell of the Divine.





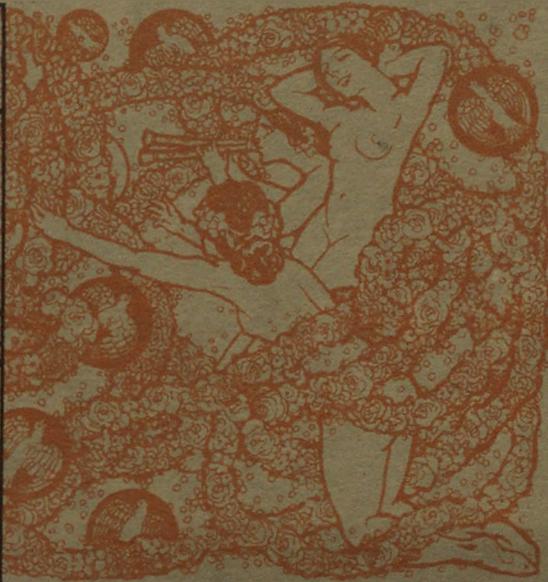
So there with nymph and faun
and bacchanal
And all the embodied Joys of
the antique world
Queen Venus holds her shame-
less court, and lures
The souls of hapless mortals to their
doom.
And tho' the sinner taken in her
toils
Be lost for ever— tho' the limbs
she kisses
Be flung in the end to where the
greedy flames
Flicker and whisper on the floors of Hell—





et ever and anon some child
of *Man*,
*D*esperate with grief or weary
of his life,
*W*ill seek and find her palace
in the wood,
*A*nd dwell with her, and think himself
a *G*od;

*U*ntil the mortal senses flag, until
*T*he mortal heart grows cold - and thro'
the flowers
*H*ell gapes to hide for aye his mon-
strous sin.





one knows the boundaries of
that evil place.

The forest paths all shun it;
many a mile

Cut of his way the weary chap-
man goes

From town to town across the ancient
wood,

Skirting that haunt of mystery and
doom.

The maidens, going to and fro,
who bear

Billets of wood upon their shoulders,
pass

With quickened steps and with averted
eyes,

Fearing they know not what.



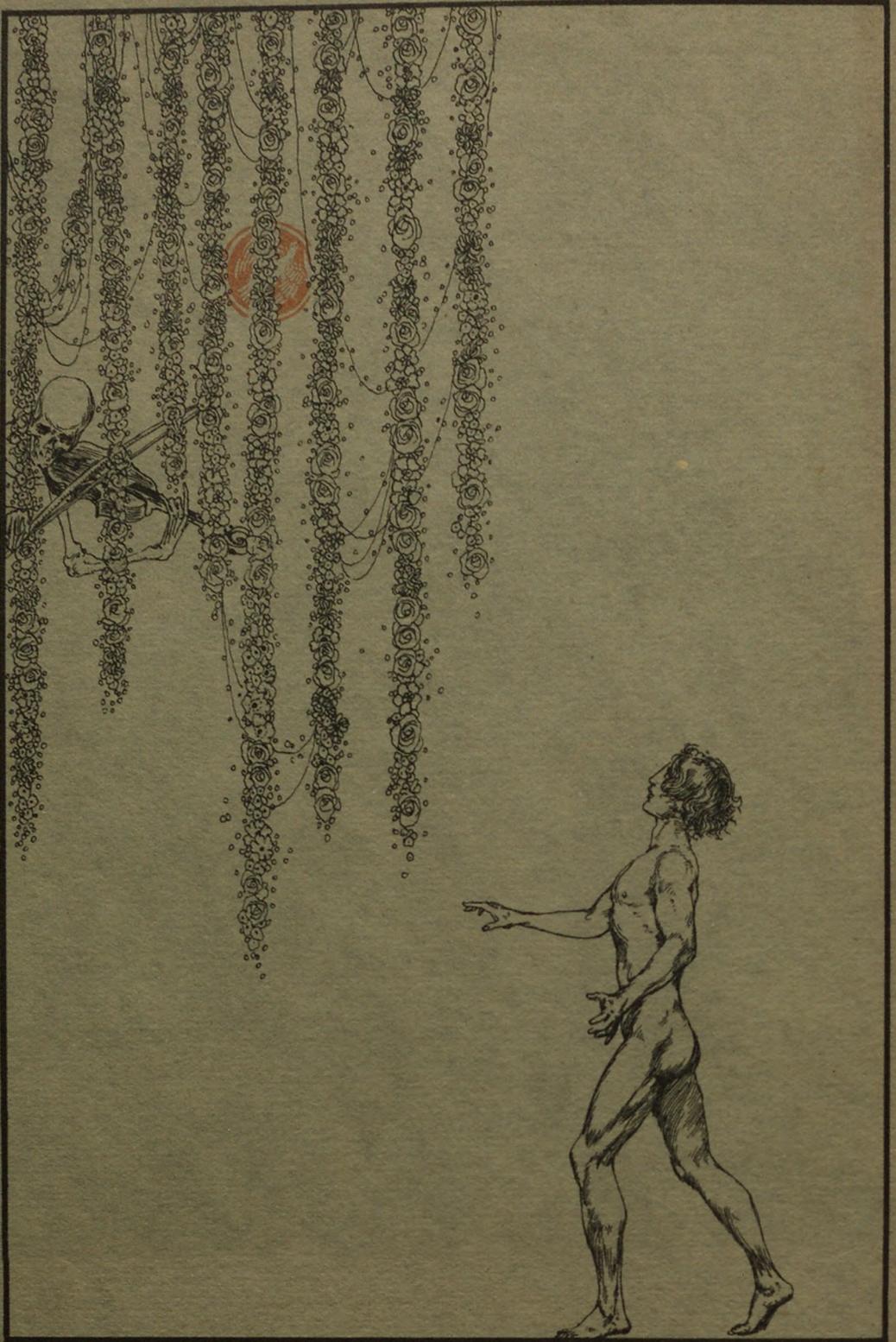




et some there be,
Maidens or youths, of gentle
blood or base,
Roaming in Springtime by the
flowery ways,
Lured by a lovelier green across
the glade—
Lured by the singing of an unseen bird—
Lured by a white shape flitting thro'
the trees—
Who wander, half unwitting, from the
path,
And ne'er are seen again.









And some have told
How, when they left the path,
a dread enchantment
Mixed with sweet terror and
undreamt-of bliss
Wrought in their hearts, and
lured them on and on.
But they, with sudden, desperate resolve,
And pangs that rent the soul, have
turned and fled,
Till on the old, familiar ways they
stood,
Heartsick and trembling; and a wild
regret
They bore within their bosoms till they
died.





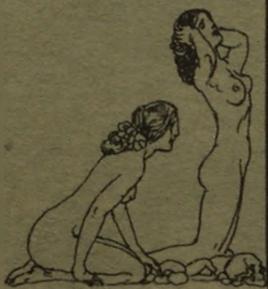
thro' these dim woods, behold!
a glimmering light
From gilded armour gleams.
A knight that bears
A harp instead of shield, rides
slowly by—
Cannhäuser, king of song this many
a year
In Landgraf Hermann's court. His brow
is graven
With lines of thought and pain, his
dark hair streaked
With silver threads; his head thrown
back, he scans
The little rifts of blue among the
leaves
Where silver clouds move softly by.
"Is Joy,"
He murmurs, "there? Is there on all
the earth,
In all the heavens, a medicine to
appease
Passions, that storming thro' the seas
of life
Have found no shore, no haven; no
delight
But turns to bitterness, and leaves the
heart
Dusty and dry with unassuaged desire?"







rooding these things he rode
with loosened rein,
Till, with a sudden clap of
wings, there rose
Beside the path a grey wood-
dove, that flew
Full in his horse's face. The great beast
reared;
It sprang aside; and thro' the track-
less wood,
In panic uncontrollable, it bore
The reckless rider. When he mastered it,
There rose before him a grim wall
of rock,
Crag above crag; where in the clefts
there grew
Great pines that spread abroad their
twisted arms;
And by a cavern's mouth, hung round
with fern
And honey'd eglantine, he drew his rein.





Chere, as he paused, upon his
soul, like dew,
A deep enchantment fell.
Again, it seemed,
Earth held for him some
wonder to behold,
Some deed to do, some un-
tried joy to win.
Full well, indeed, he guessed where now
he stood;
Full bright the memory of the ancient
tale
Of beauty and of horror burned in him.
Then while he lingered, thrilling with
the thought,
From that dark hall a far-off music
came,
And siren voices in soft waves of
sound
Bore to his ear such words, in such
a strain,
Him seemed a man might fare for ever-
more,
Forgetting all on earth and all in
Heaven,
To hearken to that music till he died:



Sailor, come
hither!
Let thy cheek wither
In the salt sea-wind
Sailor, no more!

All that men sigh
for,
Live for and die for,
Vainly, eternally—
Have we in store.

We have all
blisses,
Caresses and kisses,
Tales of the wide
world,
Laughter and lore.

Soft shall thy
sleep be,
Dreamless and
deep be.
Cares of the world lie
Far from our shore.

Sailor, come
hither!
Hither, oh! hither—
Let the cold world—
wind
Vex thee no more!







So in that sunny place he
lighted down,
And set his face toward the
Dark, still drawn
By that unearthly music. On
he strode,
Darkling; and if he stumbled, lo! his
hand
Was held by a soft hand; and now he
heard
Low laughter; or he groped, and touched
a side
Softer than silk, that quivered and
was gone.
At length a light shone round him, and
he walked
Wrapt in a golden mist; above, beneath,
Nor sky nor earth there seemed. And
slowly, then,
Wreath'd in a thousand eddying spires,
the mist
Lifted; the light broke in — he saw,
he saw!





Within a bower he stood, whose
walls were hung

With rose-red silk, and per-
fumed like the rose.

No door there was, nor window,
yet a light

Filled it, that seemed to throb from

Her who sat

Upon a golden throne and gazed at him.

Aye, there she sat, the wonder of
all worlds!

Her red-gold hair flow'd down on
either side

And curled about her feet. One ivory
breast

Was bare, and thro' the saffron robe

she wore

Her whiteness shone.









*D*istraught and dumb he gazed,
Till on *Her* scarlet lips began
to dawn
A smile - how infinitely faint!
*A*nd then
*E*ven as a drift of snow on
some high *Alp*,
*S*un-kissed, descends in thunder to
the plain,
*S*o at *Her* feet he broke and fell;
a cry
*B*urst from his lips, his burning fore-
head dropped
*U*pon *Her* knees; and soon within his
hair
*H*e felt soft hands that trembled, and
he felt
*H*er odorous warmth bend over him;





He heard
A voice that murmured like
a bird that sings
Embowered deep in forest-
leaves. It said
"Cannhäuser-minstrel-war-
rior-and my Love,
I have sought thee many
days"
The sweet voice broke,
And bathed in tears he lifted up his
face
To meet a kiss that turned his blood
to flame;
And in a mist of fire his spirit swooned.





Part II. The Deliverance.







Time, with its tyrannous
rhythm of **D**ay and **N**ight,
Is but a painted board
whereon men play
With thoughts and deeds, with
life and death, for stakes
Chat lie far, far beyond
that chequered field!

So, while on earth a year has rolled
away,

Cannhäuser, staking heaven against a kiss,
Hath played his reckless game; and now
at last

Grows, as the wearied senses flag,
aware

Of imminent forces gathering for his
doom,

Moved by that patient, veiled **A**ntag-
onist

Who plays with each man for what
stakes he will.

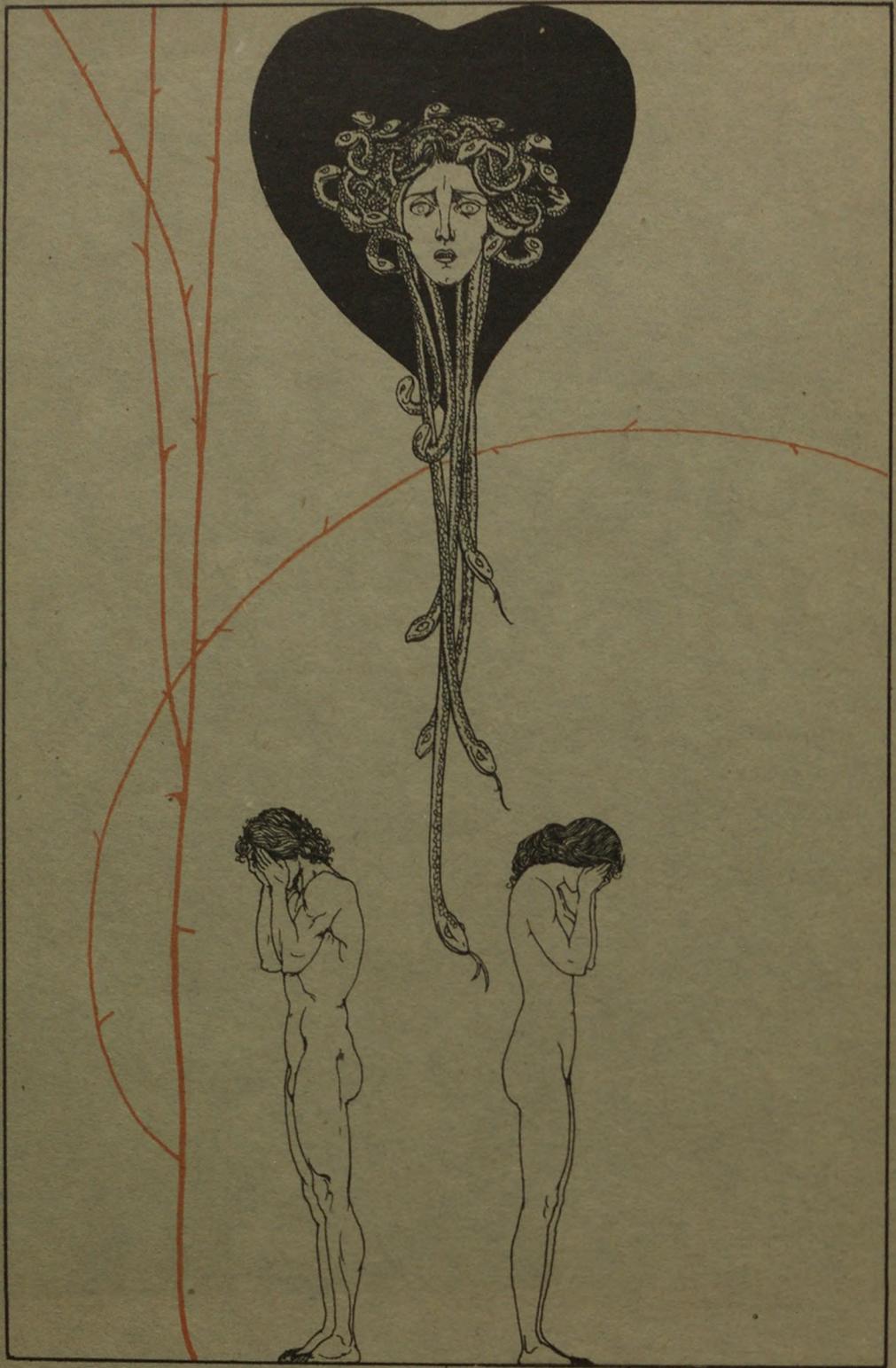




till all around is fair; before
the bower
Of Venus lies a flowery forest-
glade,
Where youths and maidens whose
bright limbs are bound
With skins of leopards, dance to notes
more sweet
Than ever in the halls of mighty kings
Are heard by mortal men; far-off there
gleams
A belt of summer sea, where Sirens
stand
Naked as morning on the rocks, and
chant
Their magic strain to ocean-wearied men.
Yet as the wild notes stream upon
the wind,
And still more fierce and more tumultuous
The Bacchic dances whirl,







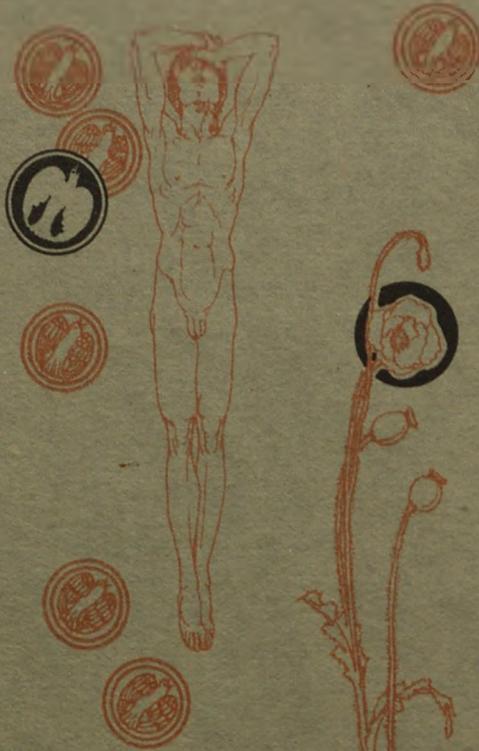


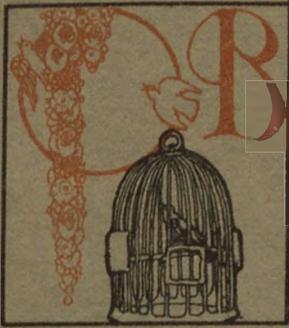
Here falls a mist
That steals the colour from the
flowery lawn,
That turns to grey the forest
greenery,
That chills the blood, and bids,
with looks abashed,
The couples part, that now on tides of
passion
Were borne like dead leaves on an
autumn gale.
At last, with notes untunable and slow,
The music drooped to silence.





hen the **K**night,
Lifting his weary head from **V**enus'
lap,
Cried out aloud, "Ah, woe
is me! **T**o wake—
God, let me wake again!"





elovëd," then
The Queen of Love replied,
"what troubleth thee?"

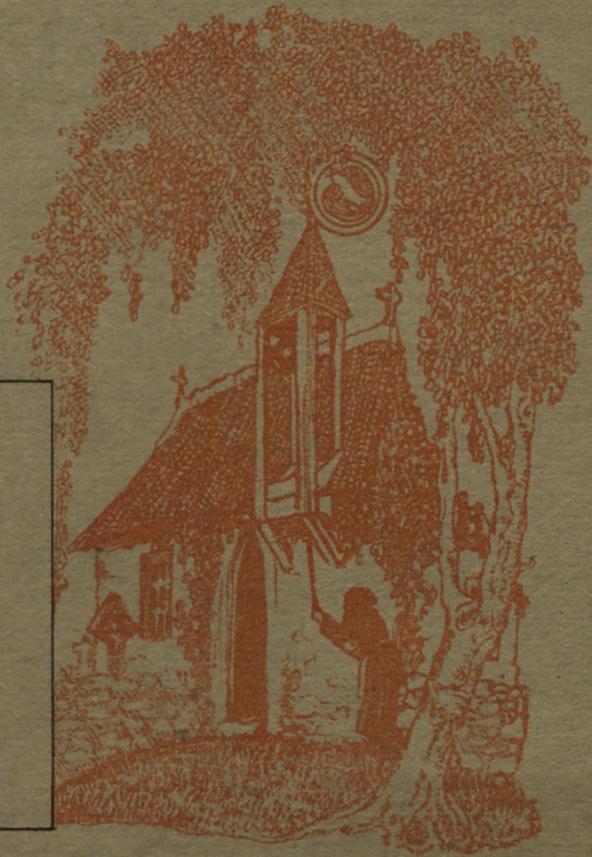
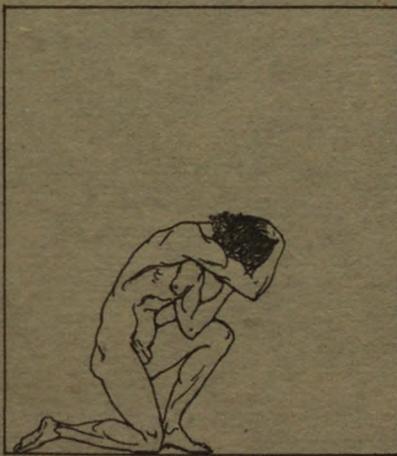
Say, whither roam thy
thoughts?" Cannhäuser gazed
with haggard eyes upon her.

Then he spake:—

"I lay in dreams. Methought
I heard from far

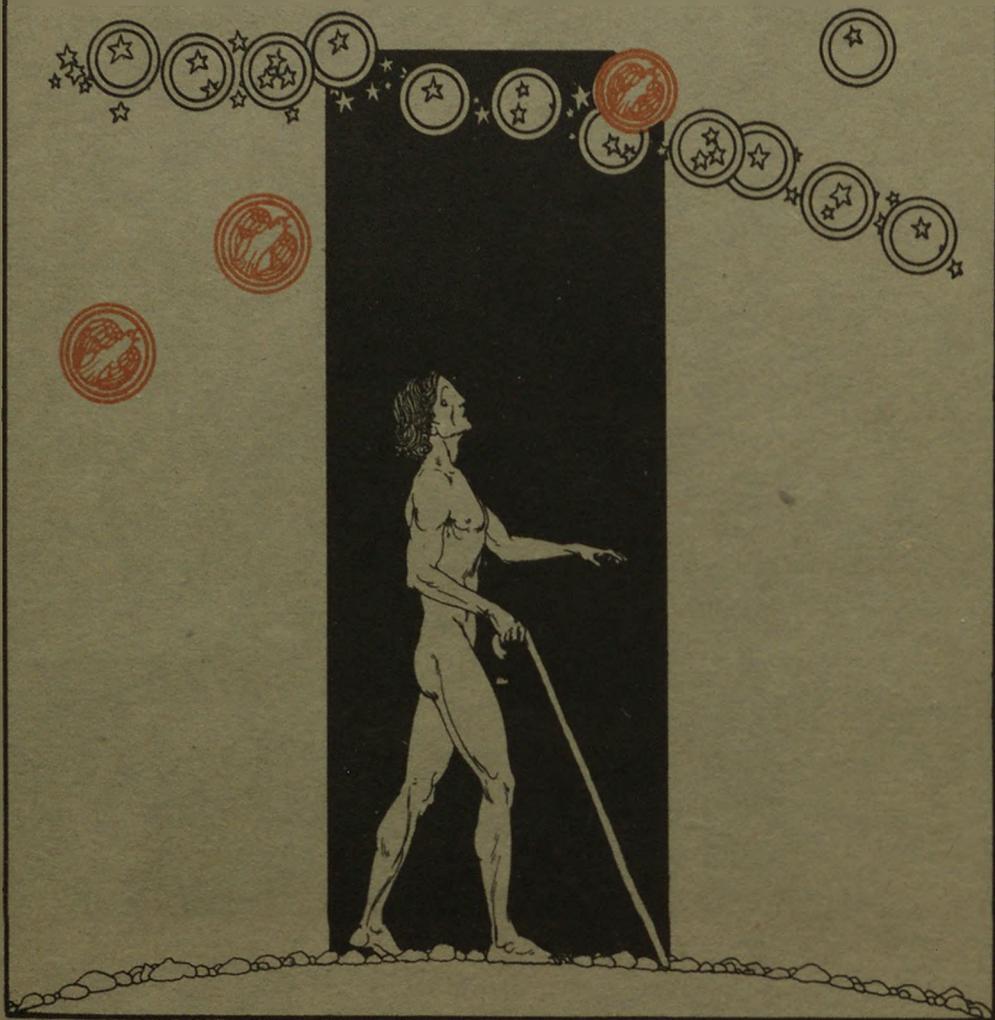
A sound that long mine ears have heard
no more.

Methought I listened to the chime of bells—





ow long, ah me, since last those
chimes I heard!
How time hath passed since
hither first I came
I cannot measure. Days and
months for me
Are nothing, since no more I see
the Sun,
No more at night the friendly stars of
heaven.





see no more renewed the tender
green

That brings the summer back.

The nightingale

No more I hear, Spring's advent
heralding—

And must I hear them, see them, ne'er
again?"





hen Venus started from her
couch and spake:—

“Ha! What is this? What
foolish plaints are these?
Hast thou already wearied of
these charms,

The marvels which my love vouchsafed
thee? Or

How is't? Doth being a god repent
thee so?

Hast thou forgot so soon how sorely
once

Thou suffered'st? And now what joys
are thine?

Up, up my minstrel! Take thy harp
in hand,

And sing of Love— which thou can'st
celebrate

With praise so sweet, it won the Queen
of Love!

Yea, sing of Love, whose highest meed
is thine.”

And then Cannhäuser caught his harp
and sang:—





hy praise resound! Exalted be
the power

That wrought such miracles of
love for me!

Those raptures sweet, thy love's
unrivalled dower,

My highest theme of song shall ever be.

For love, for happiness, my bosom panted;

My senses thirsted passion's joys to prove;

Then, what alone to gods thou erst had'st
granted,

To me, a mortal, did'st thou give thy love.

Yet mortal, mortal, still I be!

Thy love is all too great for me!

A god's enjoyments never die;

The slave of time and change am I

Not pleasure only charms my heart;

In joy I long for sorrow's smart.

From thee, my Queen, I must away—

Ah, Goddess, let me part, I pray!"





hat strain is this for me,"

cried **V**enus then,

"**T**o hear within the bower of

Love; and why

To tones of dreary sadness
sinks thy song?

Where are the glory and the passion
fled

That bade thee sing of **L**ove, of **L**ove
alone?

What meaneth it? **W**herein hath failed
my love?

Belovèd, say for what thou blamest me?"





Again Cannhäuser struck his
harp, again
Upon the heavy-scented
air were borne
The notes of mortal yearning
and unrest:—



o praise thy love my song
shall never tire.

Blest, ever blest, who once
hath known thy charms!

Thrice blest who with impassion'd
hot desire

Hath learnt the love of gods within
thine arms!

The marvels of thy realm my senses
ravish;

Enchanting rapture floats upon the
air;

Thou need'st not any gift that earth
can lavish;

In the wide world is nought so sweet,
so fair.







et—mid thy sweet and scented
bowers

I sigh for earth's fresh woods
and flowers;

For our pure heaven of lucent
blue;

For fields ashine with morning dew;

For songs of birds in bosky dells:

And dear, familiar chime of bells.

From thee, my Queen, I must away—
Ah, Goddess, let me part, I pray!"









ut Venus with brows bent and
sparkling eyes
Railed on her lover. "Hypocrite",
she cried,
"Traitor and ingrate, hast thou
won my love,
Enjoyed it to satiety, and wrung
The last wild throb of passion from
my breast
To cast me off in scorn, and seek
on earth
For fleeting joys, mere shadows of
the bliss
That here is freely and forever thine?
Ah, nay! my knight and minstrel,
turn once more
To her who shared with thee her
heaven of love!





Beloved, come! See here inviteth
A grot with eastern perfume
sweet.

A deity whom Love delighteth
Might choose with rapture this
retreat.

And here on softest cushions lying
Thy limbs in languid ease shall sleep—
While scented airs are round thee sighing
With passion's fire thy blood shall leap.
Far off I hear a voice of sweetness calling
That bids me, softly on thy bosom falling,
With glowing looks mine arms about
thee twine,

And beg thee drink my lips' celestial wine.
A feast of joy our feast of Love shall be.
Come, let us keep the glad festivity!
No shy and modest homage shalt thou bring—
To Love's own Queen, who crowneth
thee her king!"









In vain, in vain upon his ears
there fell
The passion-fraught entreaty.
Once again
The harpstrings clashed, and
thus Cannhäuser sang:—
“Goddess of Love, in joy supreme and
duty

Thy praise alone be ever sung by me!
Thou art the only source of love and
beauty;
All gifts of grace and power come
from thee.
The passion thou within my heart
hast fired
For thee alone shall burn, a votive
flame,
And 'gainst the world, undaunted and
untired,
Henceforth I'll fight to glorify thy name.





ut~ back to earth *I* needs
must fly,
Or here, a slave, must live
and die!
For liberty, for liberty
I thirst and yearn unceasingly.
I long for battle, long for strife,
Yea, tho' it cost my very life.
From thee, my Queen, *I* must away~
Ah, Goddess, let me part *I* pray!"





“



o, madman, go!" *She* cried.
"Infatuate fool!
Thou traitor, see, *I* stay thee
not! Away!
The lot thy heart is pining
for be thine!
Hence! Seek again the heartless race
of men,
Whose bigot gloom and solemn shame-
fastness
We, deities of light and joy, have fled,
To warm us in the lap of mother
Earth.
Away, thou fool! and thy salvation seek-
Forever seek, to find it nevermore.





ull soon I frow will pride desert
thy soul
I see thee humbly creeping back
to me—
In lowliest contrition see thee
come—

To supplicate once more my magic power.

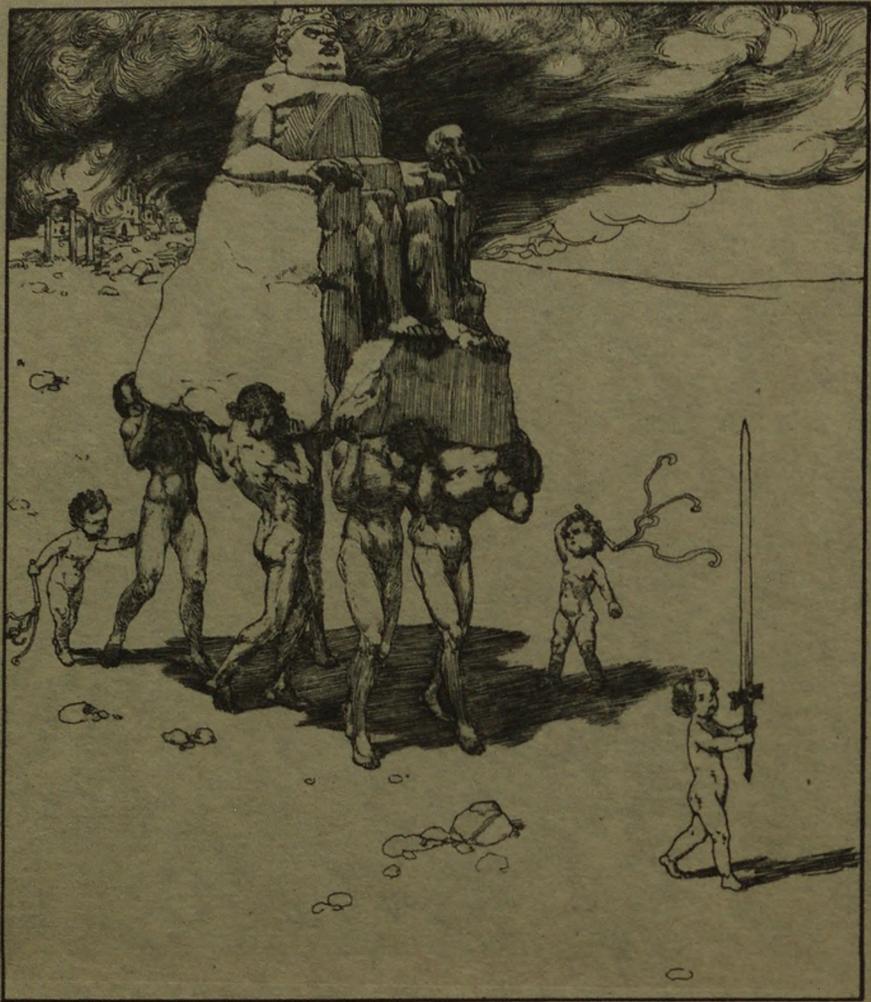




And should'st thou not return -
so shall my curse
light on the universal race
of man.

Then vainly seek the miracles
of Love!

The earth shall be a desert - heroes,
slaves!







But no! Thou wilt return. Return
once more!"



“



*h Goddess,” cried the Knight,
“the hour is come.*

*Thy lover flees from thee for
evermore!*

*And now by prayer, penance
and purity*

I must atone for sin!”

“O fool,” she said,

*“The sins men sin with me are ne’er
atoned,*

For never can the heart repent of them.

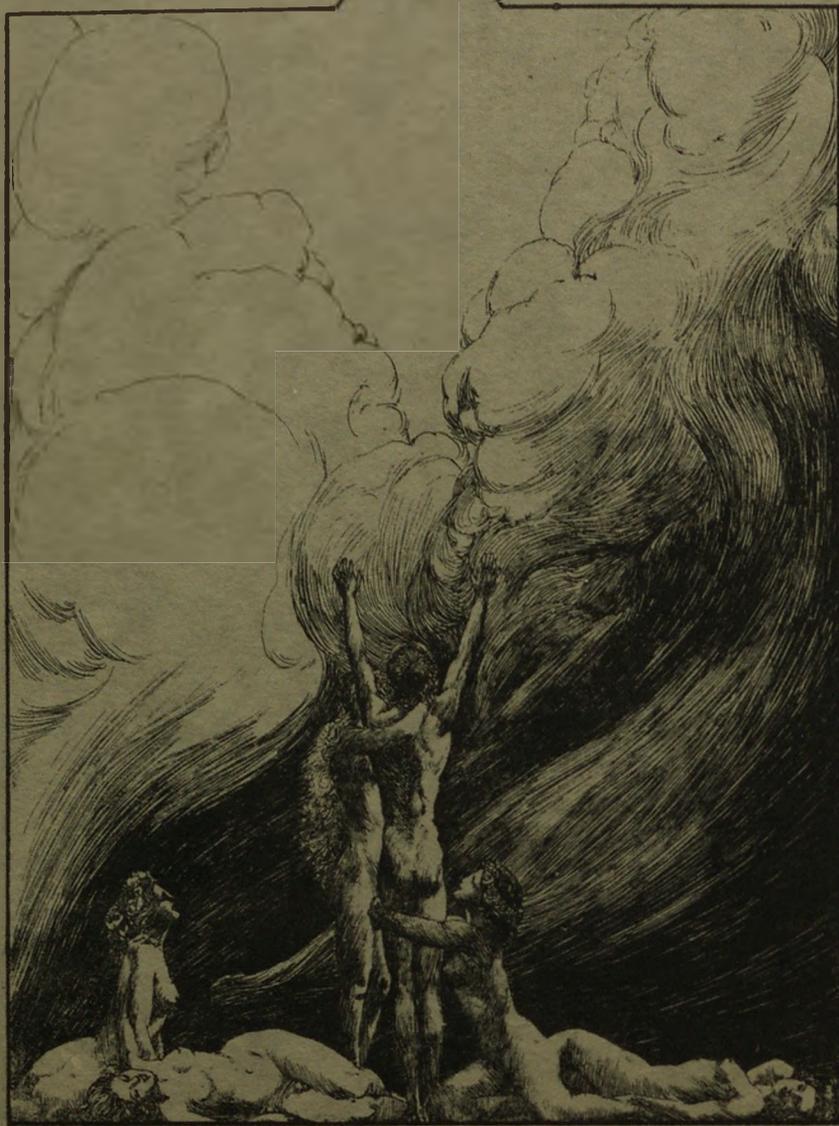
*Henceforth upon this breast is all thy
heaven.*

Salvation’s door is closed to thee!”





of so,"
Cannhäuser cried. "while *Mary*
lives and reigns!
Mary, deliver me!"





sudden shriek
Broke from the lips of Venus
at that name.

One moment each on each they
glared— then shook

The earth beneath a thunder-
peal; the Knight

Saw all the misty landscape melt and
whirl

About him; thro' the tumult and the
din

Saw for a moment yearning eyes that
gleamed

And tossing arms. Then on his dizzy
brain

Darkness descended, and he knew no
more.





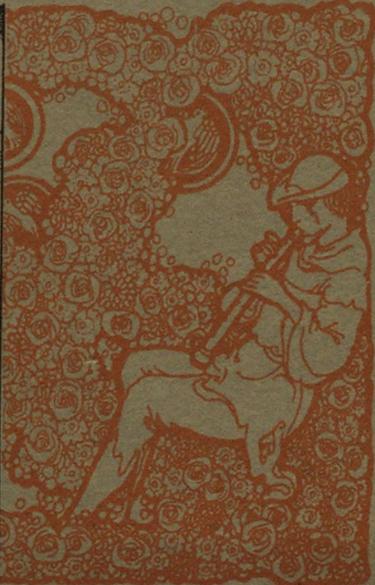


Part III The Reunion.





weet with the wholesome
odours of the earth
Blows thro' the blooming
vale of Eisenach
The wind of Spring. A shep-
herd boy, who leads
His flock adown the mount-
ain-side, in joy
Carols aloud a hymn of praise to Her,





he Northland Goddess of the
Earth; whose might
Clings not to caverns, loves the
sun and rain,
Scorns sensual sloth, and knows
no wizard spell,
But thrills the heart in every breath
of Spring,









*opens the flower, awakes the
questing bee,
Sends the swart ploughman with
his team afield,
Makes each ripe maid a shy
divinity,
And stirs in passionate youth the heroic
heart
To deeds of high adventure.*





Thus he sang:

old a the goddess from under
the hill
Came flitting by forest and
lea,

with the music of birds
and of murmuring rill

And the blooming of flower and tree.

I was dreaming a dream, so wondrous
fair,

Of her silver robes and her golden hair-

And when I awakened, the Spring it
was there!

The sun shone warm with a cloud-
less ray,

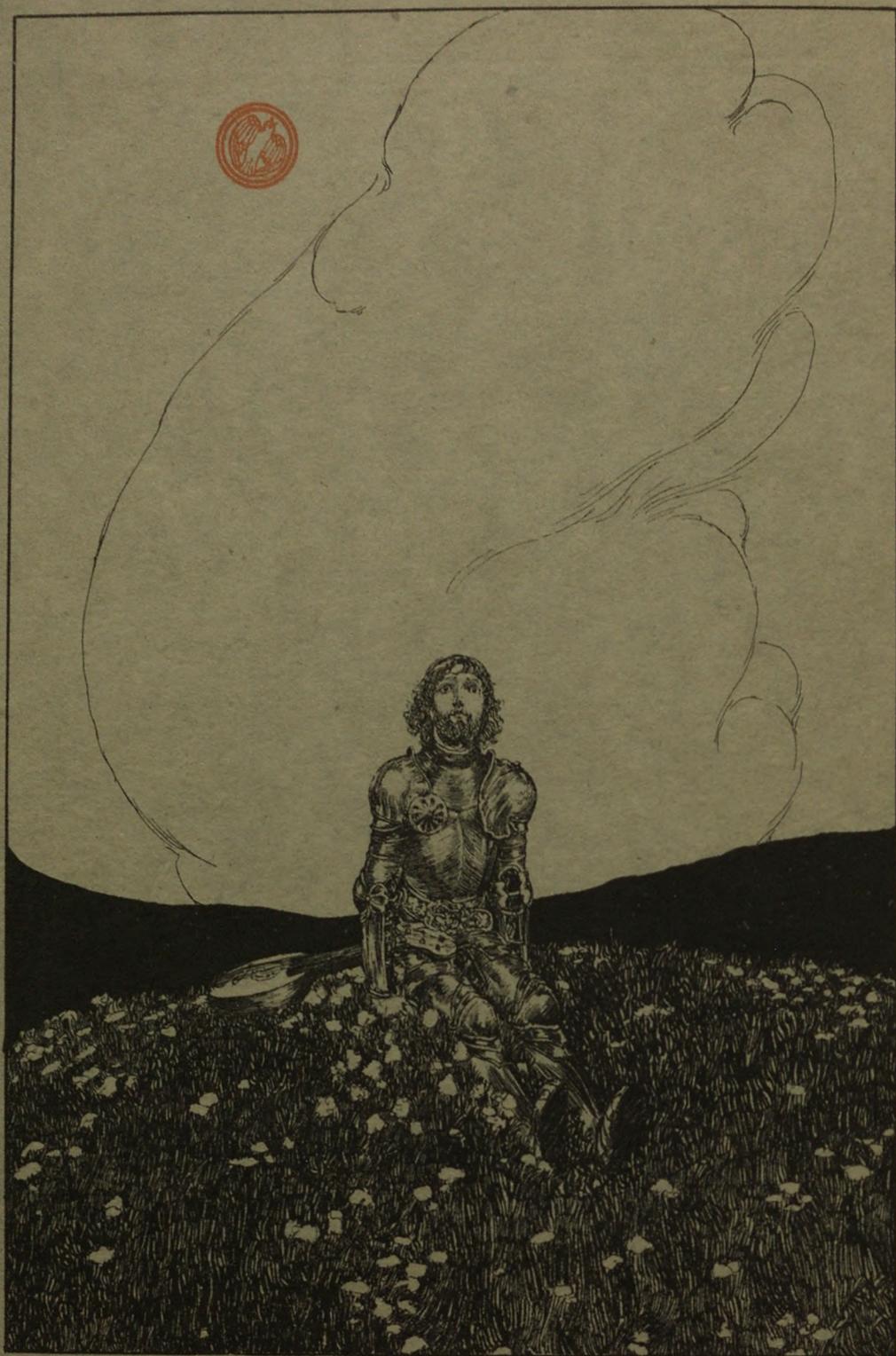
It was May once more! It was beauti-
ful May!

So now I go singing and singing
a main,

Sweet May, sweet May, it is coming
again!









apt in his joy of heart the lad
passed on:

Nor marked where lay beside
his path a Knight

Whose right hand held a harp.

As one in death

Prone did he lie, beside a flowery
brake;

Yet ere the gay notes of the song were
stilled

He woke, and raised his head, and
drank them in;

And such a look within his haggard
eyes

Dawned, as in one that wakens from
a dream

Of terror and despair, and sees the
world,

The dear, familiar world, about him still.





air was the scene on which his
waking eyes

In doubt and wonder looked.

Across the vale

Frowned with its nodding pines
and dark ravines

The Hörsel Mount; but where the
Minstrel stood

Among the flowery meadows, a broad
stream

Flowed gleaming from the sunrise, over-
arched

By the dim bridges of a distant town,
Above whose crowded roofs and glitter-
ing spires,

Mid beech and chestnut woods embow-
ered, arose

The Wartburg's battlements and clus-
tered towers.

Like some fair scene a painter limns
on gold,

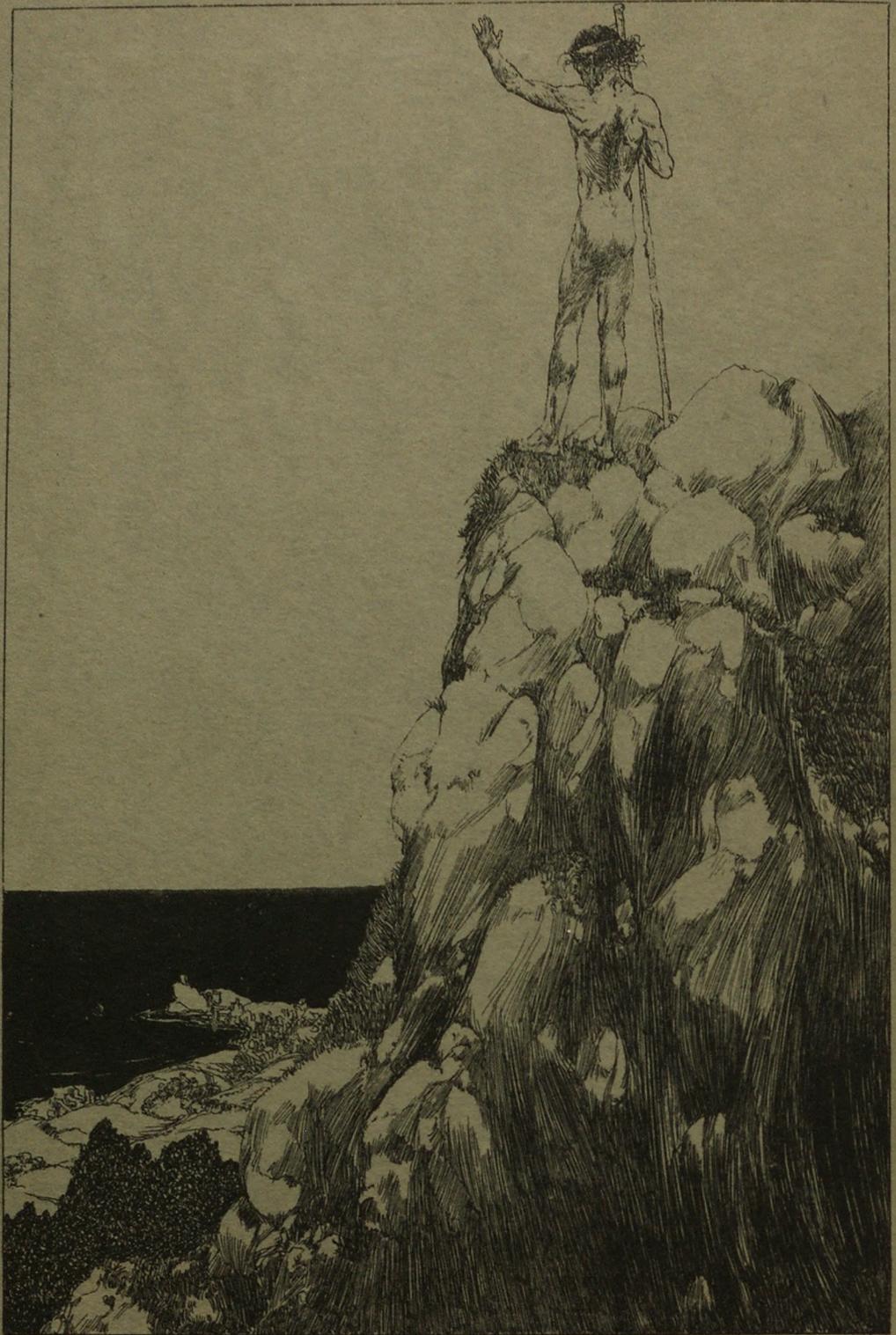
Against the dawn were ranked those
silent towers,

Vaulted above with blue; while twilight-
dusk

Yet lingered in the vale;









ntranced he stood,
Gazing like one who reaches
suddenly,
Nor yet believes it reached,
some toilsome height
Whence he beholds his home-
land- or the sea's
Blue shimmer, such as Grecian voices
hailed
On that high ridge of Pontic Crebizond-





hen, like **A**eolian music, far
and sweet,

Arose a solemn chant—and soon
drew nigh

A pilgrim train, marching with
steadfast step

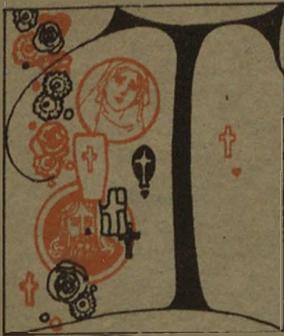
And happy faces **S**outhward set— . . . to
Rome.

And while they went, with voices deep
and grave

That hushed the morning music of the
birds,

They sang the solemn **H**ymn of **Pil-**
grimage:—





To Thee, to Thee, my steps
I bend,

O Jesus Christ, the pil-
grim's friend!

O Virgin pure to thee I
pray

For blessings on our weary way.

Too heavy, heavy was my sin;

I could no longer bear its load:

No other peace I wished to win

But chose the pilgrim's toilsome
road.

And at the festival of grace

Will humbly soon myself abase,

For he that steadfast faith attains

By penitence salvation gains.





he voices ceased, and once again
was heard

Soft fluting, mingled now with
silver chimes

From pasture-seeking kine.

A herdsman came,

But stayed his pipe, and stood aside
to note

The pilgrims passing up the stony way,
And gave them rustic greeting reverently:

“Good luck, good luck upon your way
to Rome!

And tell a bede, I pray, for my poor
soul.”





here 'neath a spreading oak
anigh he stood

The wanderer heard the simple
greeting given.

As sweetest music sank into
his soul

Chose humble words of faith. With eyes
downcast

As one by some great sorrow bowed, or
shame,

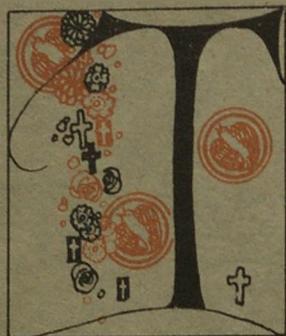
He spake in accents low, with trembling
voice:

"A mighty God, to Thee be thanks
and praise-

Great is Thy mercy- great and mar-
vellous."



*And then once more that solemn chant
arose:*



To Thee, to Thee my steps I
bend,
O Jesus Christ, the pilgrim's
friend!
O Virgin pure, to Thee I
pray
For blessings on my weary way.





hey passed, and fainter thro' the
coppice rang
The grave, deep chant of penitence
and prayer;
While still as bowed with grief he
stood, his lips
Remurmuring to himself the words they
sang:



A Rome's high festival of
grace
I'll humbly soon myself
abase,
For he who steadfast faith
attains

By penitence salvation gains.





ow faint and ever fainter on
the air
Was borne the chanting of the
pilgrim band.
Like ever-widening ripples
died away

The voices into silence – and the birds'
Soft notes began again – but ceased;





or, hark!
The sound of many voices! merry
tones
Of lute and song! and down the
Wartburg's slopes
Descending came a joyous
company;
Hermann the Landgraf, fair Churingia's
lord,
With many a knight and minstrel.





As they neared,
In wonder spake the Landgraf,
for he marked
That lonely stranger: "Friends,
who standeth there,
Lost, as it seems to me, in deep
devotion?"

"Doubtless a penitent," said one. "And yet"
Answered another hard, "methinks he
seems
Accoutred as a Knight"; and silently
All gazed in wonder.





hen a sudden cry
Broke from the lips of one:
" 'Tis he! 'tis he!
'Tis Heinrich!" and another and
another
Cried "Heinrich! Scarce I dare to
trust mine eyes."
"Thou, Heinrich von Cannhäuser, thou?"
amazed
Exclaimed the Landgraf. "What! Thou
com'st again
To seek us - us, thy friends, whose
company
Thou did'st forswear with such disdainful
pride!"
"Aye tell us all! what meaneth this return?"
Grimly spake Biterolf; and all the rest
In fainter accents echoed, "Tell us all!"





hen *Biterolf* spake further: "Art
thou come

To offer peace, or to renew the
strife?"

But he, still rapt in thought, as
though he heard not,

stood silent, answering nought. Then

Walther spake,

Knight of the *Vogelweide*, singer sweet
Of many a strain of love and love's
delight,

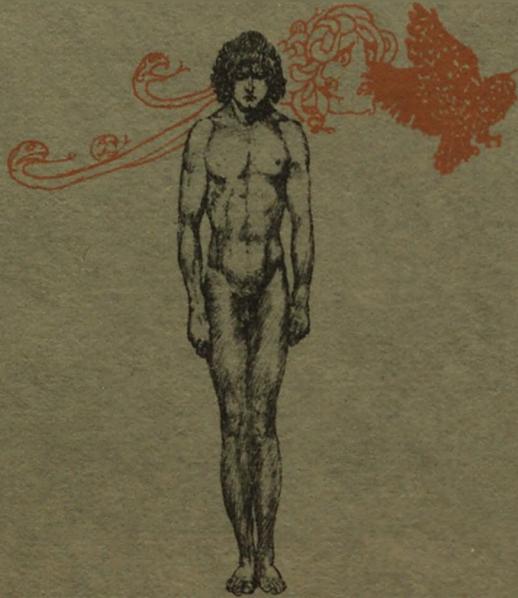
"Com'st thou again to us as friend or foe?"

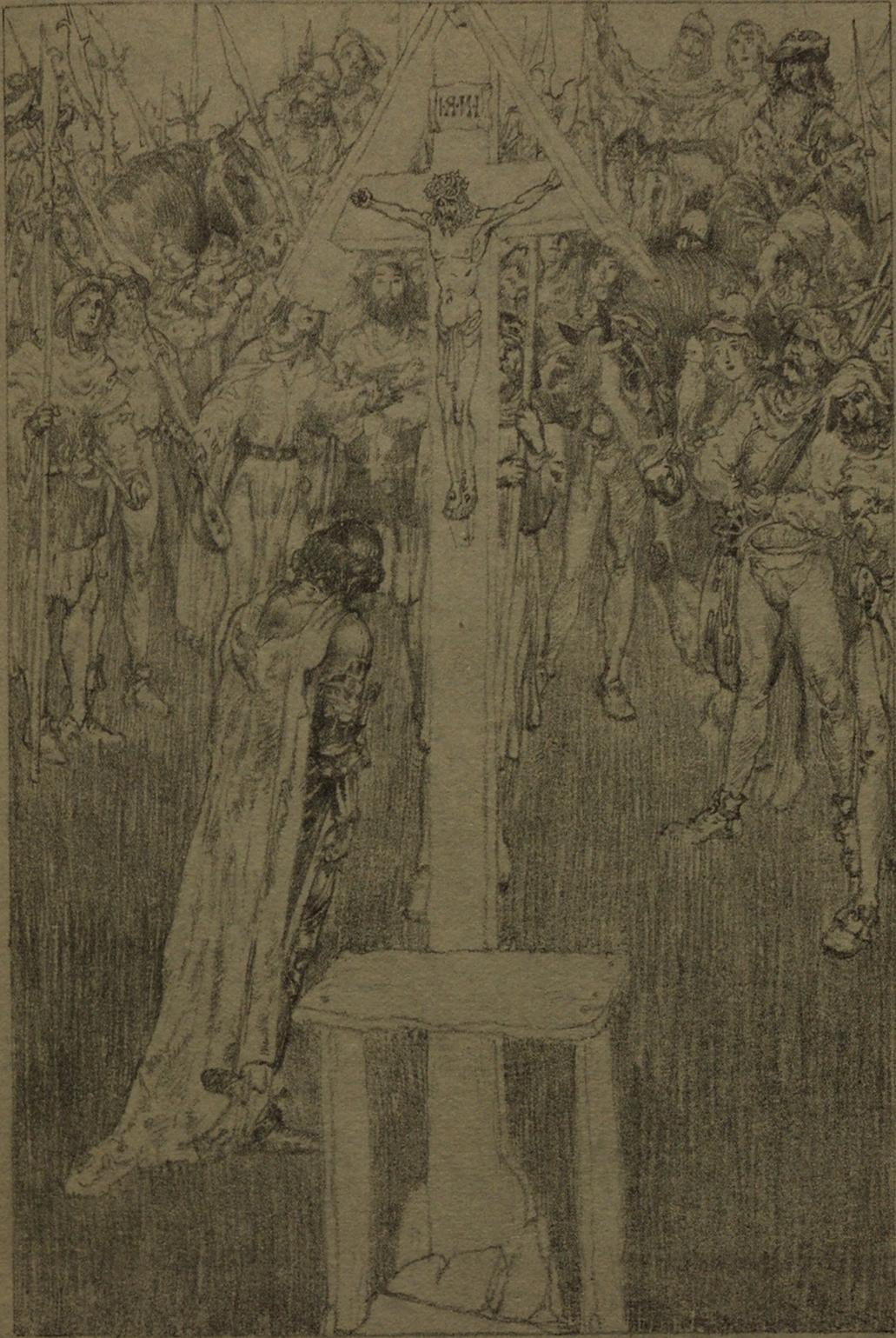
But still he answered nought; and doubt-
fully

They waited, gazing, wondering more and
more,

While with brows bent and downcast eyes
he stood

As dazed with sudden sunlight.







hen he raised
Eyes full of yearning love, and
gazed on them
Smiling; and **W**olfram joyously
exclaimed—
Wolfram von **E**schenbach, that
loyal heart—

“**N**ay, nay, what need ye ask? **I**s such
the mien
Of proud disdain? **B**rave **S**inger, wel-
come! welcome!”

Too long, alas! thine absence we lament.”
“**W**elcome,” reechoed **W**alther, “if indeed
Thou com'st in peace.”





nd Biterolf in tones
More grave, but full of deep
sincerity,
Addressed him, saying: "I too
welcome thee,
If true it is thou deemest us thy
friends."

And all the other minstrels, pressing
round,

Cried "Welcome! welcome! welcome!"





ermann spake:

"I also give thee greeting, friend.

But say,

Where hast thou tarried all this
lapse of time?"

Then, all the sunlight fading
from his eyes,

With broken voice Cannhäuser made
reply:

"Far, far from here those lands in which
I wandered,

And far from here the goal which now
I seek.

Ask not! I come not here to strive with
you.

Forgive the past, my friends - and let
me go!"

But Hermann grasped his hand. "Not so"
he cried,

"We have thee now once more. Thou shalt
not leave us."





moment then he stood irresolute-
Then o'er his eyes again swept
sudden gloom,
As when athwart the blue a
thunder cloud
Comes sailing ever nearer, si-
lently,
Then of a sudden o'er the noonday sun
Its veil of darkness draws; the song of
birds
Ceases, and grey the spectral pine-trees
stand;
Thus died away that momentary gleam,





nd bitterly he spake: "Nay-let
me go!

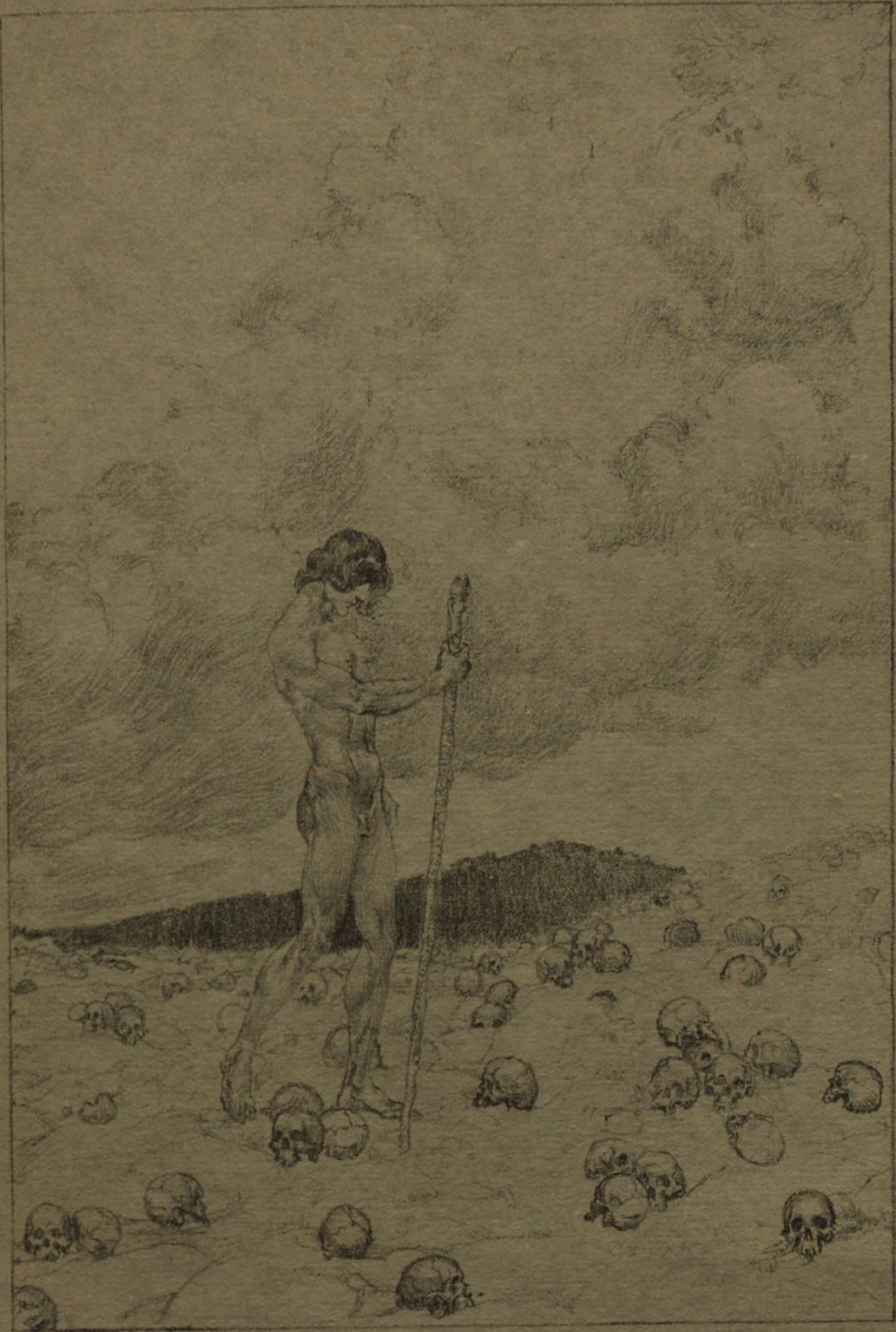
No more shall peace and happi-
ness be mine;

Ne'er may I hope to rest again
on earth;

My path is onward, onward endlessly,

And backward dare I never turn mine
eyes."







iscomfited, perplexed, they mutely
gazed,

While with a head down-drooped
and faltering step

He turned to leave them. Hope-
less now they knew

Were all appeal; and winged with silent
sighs

The words they fain had spoken died away.





ut one amidst them stood with
burning eyes
And lips that trembled, telling
all that saw
Of some great conflict raging in
his soul;

Yet in a moment all that agony
Had come and passed away. Forward he
strode,

Wolfram von Eschenbach, the bard of
Love,

And laid his hand upon the other's arm.
"Heinrich, 'tis I" he softly said. "Behold,
Look in mine eyes and read my very soul."





hen *Heinrich* slowly lifted up his
eyes;

And lo, a light, as when one
dreams of heaven,
Filled all his sight—and sweet
as song of angels

Seemed floating on the air a melody
That ever nearer came, as heralding
A vision of celestial happiness,
While *Wolfram* spake these words:

“*Heinrich*, remain!

If not for love of us, for love of her-
lisabethh!”





hen from the opened heaven
Broke forth that radiance; and
entranced he stood,
Speechless. But suddenly, as from
a dream
Awakening, he cried, " **E**lisabeth!
O, name of sweet resistless influence!
But wherefore, **W**olfram, name that name
to me?"



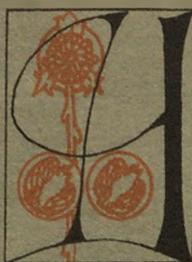
“**H**einrich,” said **W**olfram, “oft we
vied in song;
Now didst thou triumph over us,
and now
Didst own defeat in skill; yet ah,
one prize,
One prize there was, which none could
win but thou.
Since, by some passion driven, some in-
ward storm
That raged within thy breast— we know
not what—
Thou parted'st from us on far wanderings
bent,
Our dear **P**rincess and patroness of **S**ong
To every minstrel lay has closed her heart.
She shuns our company, and evermore
We see her cheek grow paler day by day.
Shall **I** say more? **O** come! **R**eturn dear
friend,
And let thy voice with ours again be
joined;
Then shall our festivals no longer miss
Her beauty's bright and starlike influence.”





With look exalted, as a soul elect,
Cannhäuser stood. "O God," he
cried, "is this
My expiation? Have the pain
and toil
Through which I faintly hoped
to win Thy grace
Turned all to bliss, divine, ineffable;
Such bliss as souls, ah, worthier far
than mine
Had gone thro' fire to win?"





He turned to where
The Landgraf stood, and on his
knees before
The aged lord, "My prince" he
said, "if I
Again may be thy servant and
thy knight,
Thy singer and thy friend, behold me
here!"
Then shouted all the minstrel band for joy,





nd *H*ermann spake: " *B*e this a
festal day
*O*ur friend's return to celebrate!
*M*y daughter
*S*hall crown the victor in the
strife of song.

*H*einrich, belike in those far-distant
lands
*W*here thou so long hast wandered, thou
hast learned
*S*ome newer, sweeter, nobler strain than
yet
*B*y our rude *S*axon fingers hath been
touched
*U*pon the northland harp. *C*ome then!
the feast
*A*waits us in my *W*artburg's ancient hall!



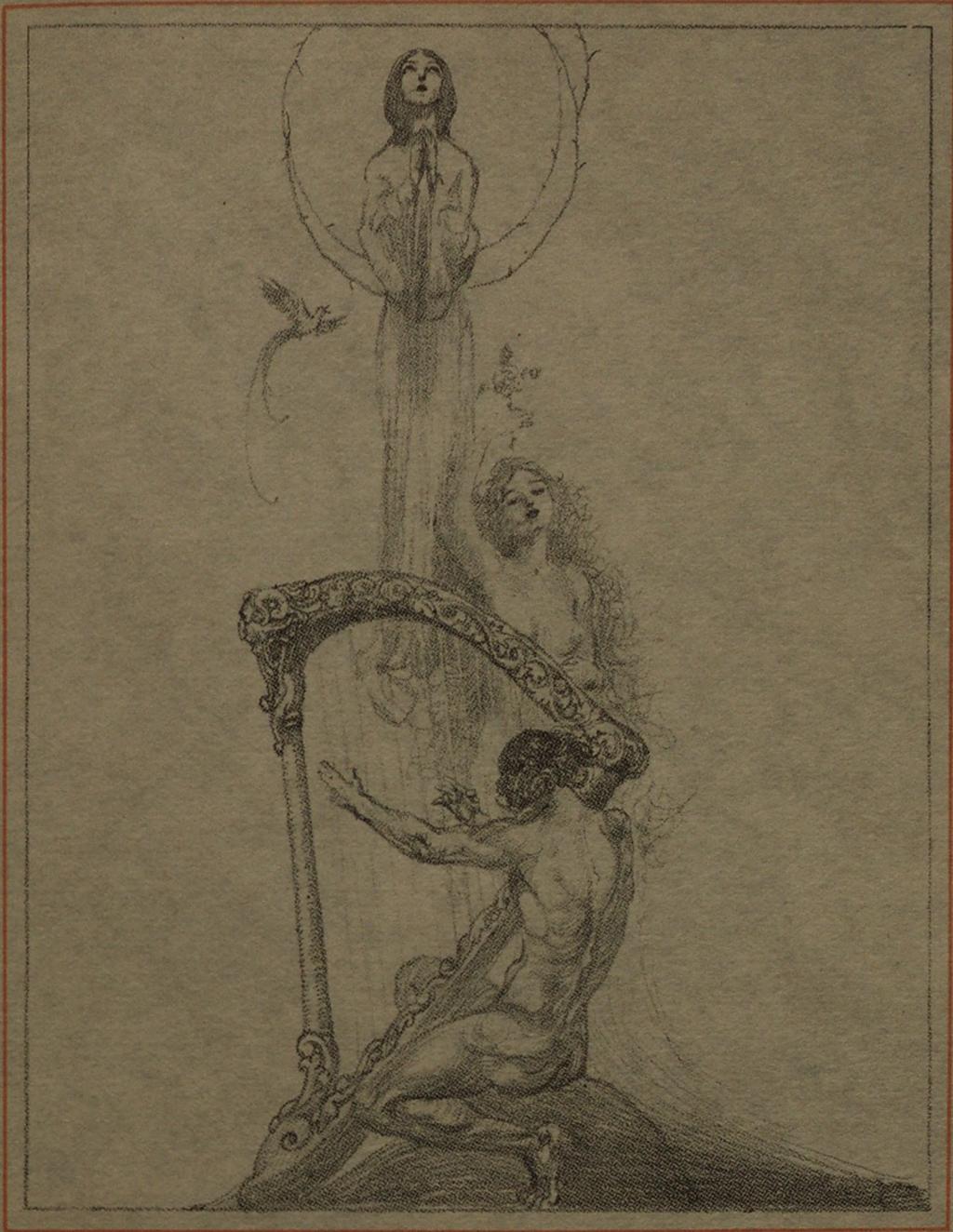


So crying "To the Wartburg!" that
gay band
Of knights and minstrels took
the upward path
And soon were lost among the
woods-But one,
Wolfram von Eschenbach, with steps
more slow,
And sundered from that merry company,
Moved like a man on whom some doom
impends,
Some agony, for which his will unshaken
Must nerve itself in silence and alone.









Part IV The Strife of Song.





A year had passed since *Her-*
mann's lovely ward
Had set her light foot in the
Hall of Song
That from the Wartburg,
with its windows tall
Looks on the smiling valley.
But to-day

The silent bannered walls, the empty floor,
Receive her, flushed and eager, as she
comes

Alone, to greet the well-loved room
where joy

Sprang in her heart, and pitifully died,
And springs again the keener for that
pang.





e comes again!" she murmured.

" Oh, once more

*These walls shall ring with
music from his hand!*

*Yea, even now their treasured
melodies,*

*Their silent echoes of the strains he
made,*

*Do beat upon my heart, that dared not
hear them*

*While yet it seemed that he should come
no more:-*





Hall, so dear for his dear
sake

I greet thee, all-beloved
room!

His songs in thee again
shall wake,

And rouse me from my night of gloom.

When from thy midst he vanished,

How dear it seemed to me!

All peace from me was banished,

And joy deserted thee.





ven as she spake, a footfall at
the door

Sounded; she turned her head;
her knight stood there.

A moment more, and, kneeling,
he had bent

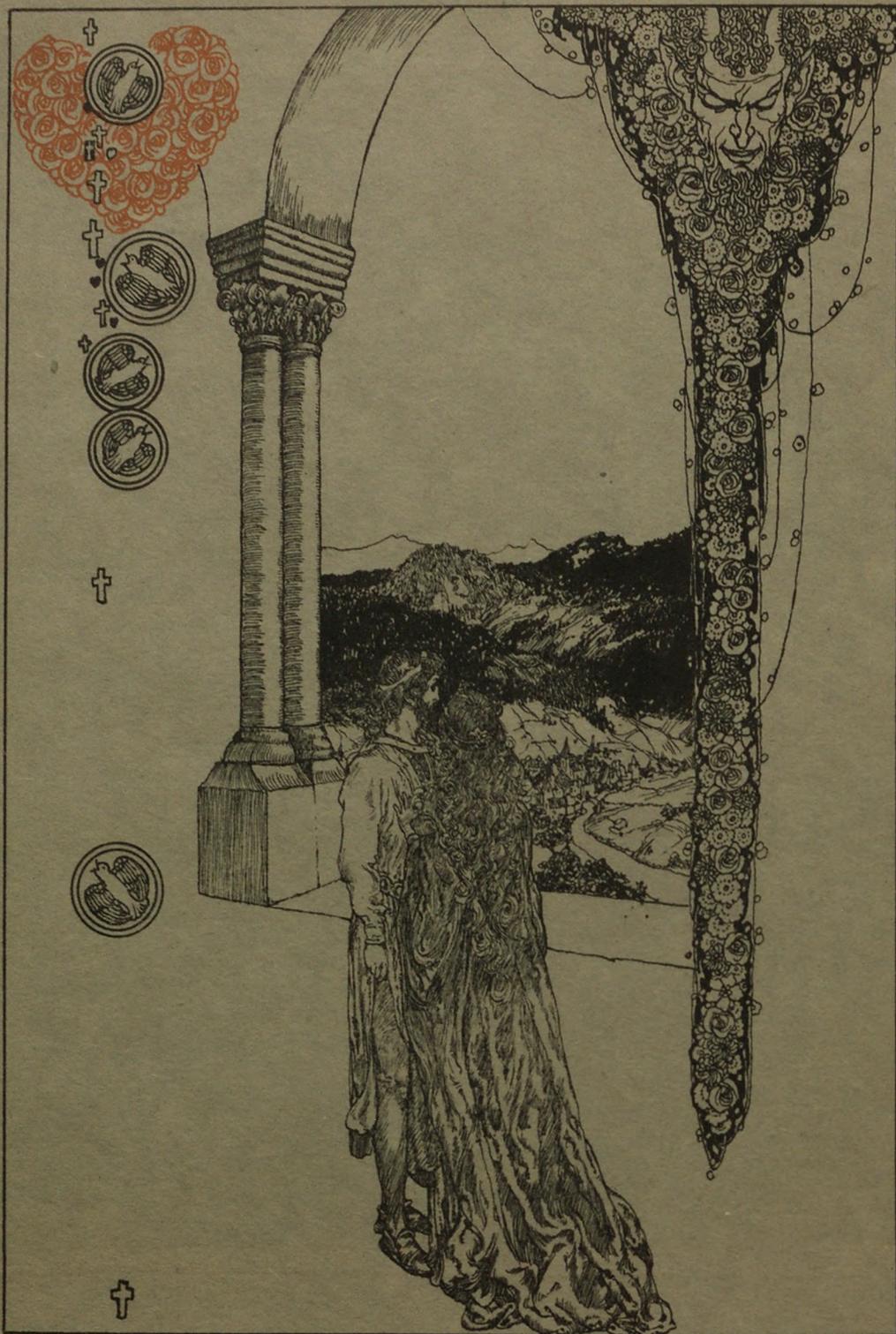
His proud, dark head above her trembling
hand.

"Elisabeth" he cried but dark remem-
brance,

Mingled with eager passion, choked his
voice.









hen she: "Ah God! arise and
leave me. Go!

This is no place for you to
kneel. This Hall
Was once—is still—your kingdom.
Rise, I pray you.

I am glad that you are come thus safe
and well.

Where have you tarried from your friends
so long?"

He rose; and from the window where they
stood

Saw on the summer sky far down the
vale

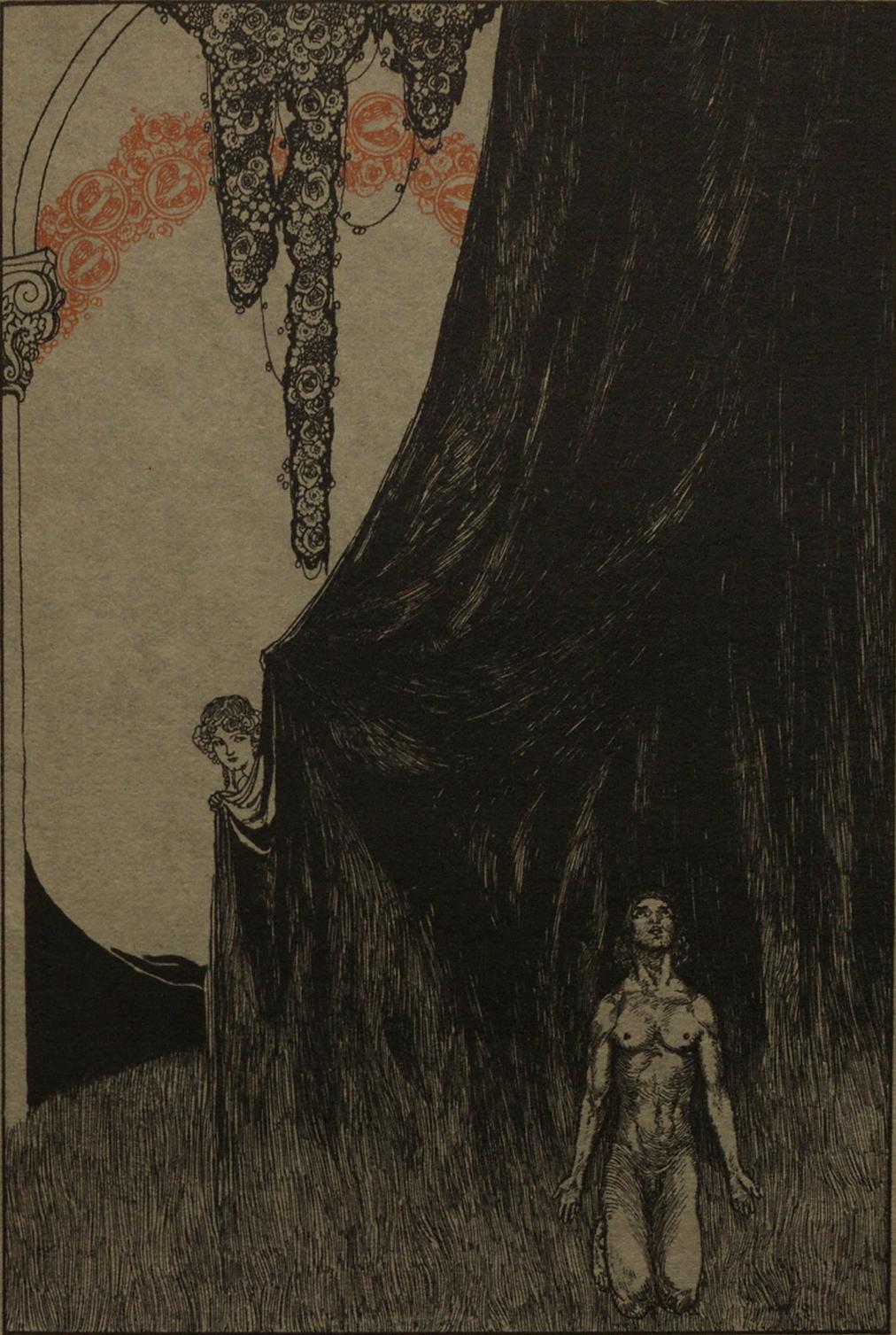
A frowning ridge of pine-clad mountain
rise;





Then bent on her a look inscrutable,
And spake: "Ah, lady! ask me
not. I come
From far-off lands. A dark
oblivion
Hath drawn itself 'twixt Yesterday and
Now.
Nought know I, nought remember, save
alone
That ne'er I thought to see your face
again."







hen what," she murmured,
"brought thee here once more?"
"A miracle!" he cried, "a
miracle!

Wondrous beyond all telling.

O sweet lady,

Grief, and impatience, and a seething
heart,

These drove me forth. I dared not hope
to win

What most I prized, and here, in daily
sight

Of thee, dear lady, never could renounce.

Oh, give me hope, or send me forth again!

Without thee I am lost; yet better far

To fling myself into the storms that rage

Beyond these quiet halls, than here
endure

The torment of thy beauty"—





h, forbear!

*Heinrich," she cried; "thy words
are strange and wild.*

*No Helen am I, with a face to
madden*

*The hearts of men, and cloud
their eyes to God.*

*He made me as I am, a mortal maid—
And if His miracle have brought thee
hither,*

*That miracle I bless! With all my
heart's*

Profoundest gratitude I bless it.





6!

Forgive me, pray— I know not
what I do.

Methinks I dream; and like a
foolish child,

Or still more foolish, unresisting
bend

Before the might of some strange
influence.

I scarce do know myself. I cannot rede
Without thine aid this riddle of my heart.





Within this hall to minstrel
lays
I listen ed, many a year,
And songs of love and
songs of praise
Seemed pastime sweet
to hear.



But, ah, what new mysteri-
ous feeling
Your songs awoke within
my heart!
Now through my soul
seemed anguish stealing,
Now sudden passion seemed to dart.



Yea, feelings which my heart
had banished
And longings ne'er before
confessed!
All maiden joys were dead
and vanished.
And nameless rapture filled my breast.





When you no more with us
would linger
All peace and pleasure
fled away -
The strains of every other
singer

Seemed but an idle empty lay.

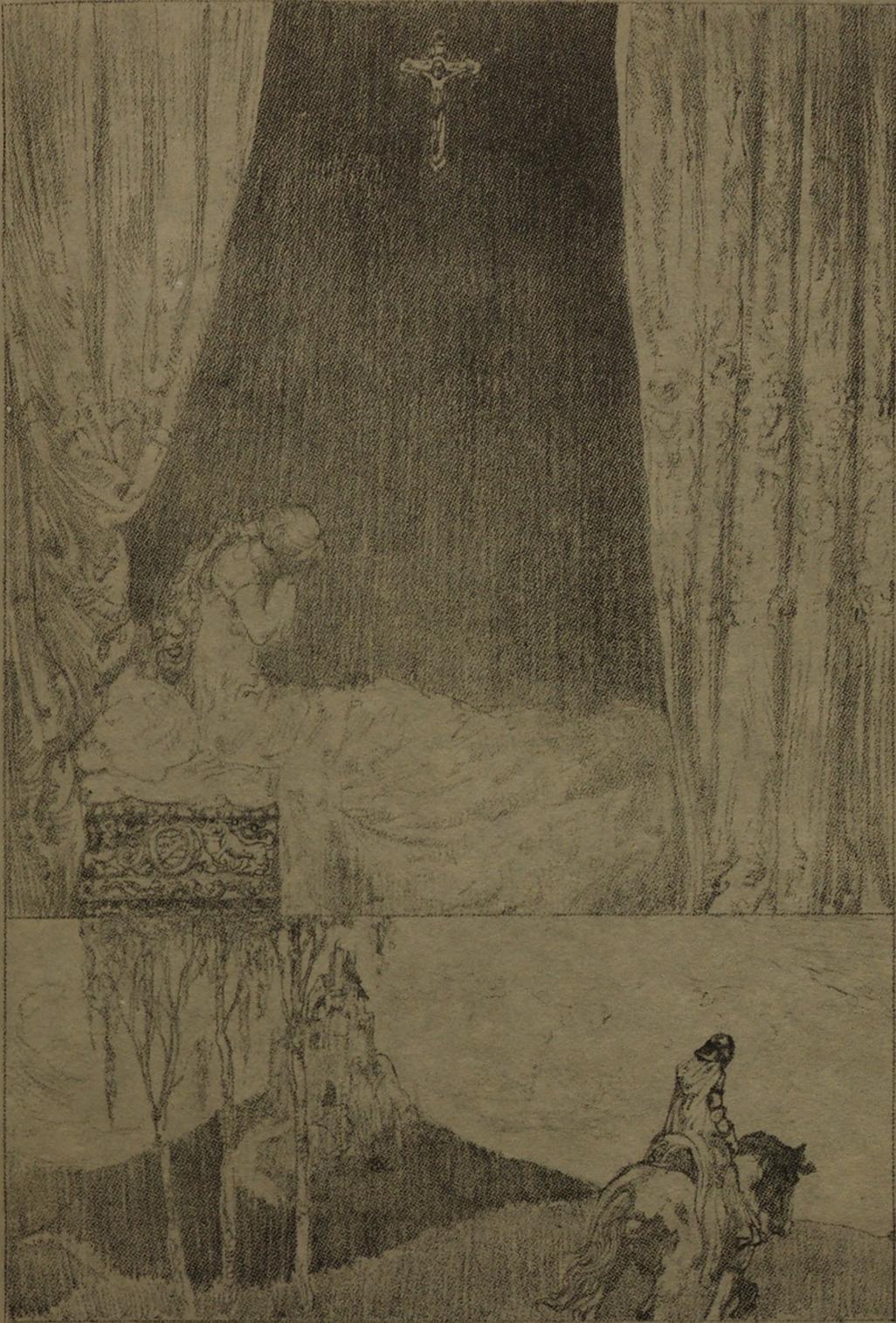


I slept - my dreams were
pain and grieving -
I woke - 'twas dark despon-
dency.

All sweet content my heart
was leaving -

Heinrich! what was't you did to me?







hen surged within his heart the
tide of joy

Tumultuous, and as his spirit
soared

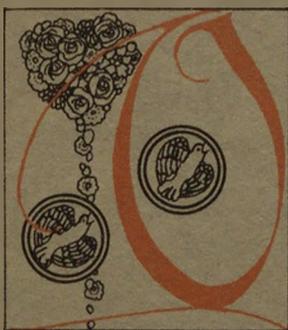
Upon the height of that ecstatic
hour,

Broke from his lips an answering cry of
song:—





His thank the God of Love
For bringing,
The God who touched the
strings for me!
He spake to thee in all my
singing,
And He hath brought me back to thee.



h, blessed be the gracious
Power
That brings such tidings
sweet and dear!
And blessed, blessed, be
the hour
Wherein thy words of love I hear!



gain I see the world a-
round me;
I long to live - to live as
thine -
Yea, life and love again
have found me,
And all their wondrous joys are mine!





clasped in each others' arms the
lovers stood,
For one brief moment. Pure
and perfect joy
They fasted then—until the
world broke in,
And with it came the Doom. Laughing
it came,
With tripping of innumerable feet
And rustling robes bedecked with festal
gold.





he cry of silver trumpets went
before;

The clash of cymbals and the
throb of harps

Swelled with the coming of the
happy throng

That poured along the stately corridors,
And with the pomp, the colour and the

pride

Of that long-dead, magnificent, joyous
time

O'erflowed the **H**all of **S**ong.





pon a dais
The Landgraf Hermann stood;
and as the crowd
Fell silent at his upraised hand,
he spake:--

“ Lords of Churingia, ladies fair,
and minstrels;

To-day we hail with gladness the return
Of that bold singer, whom unwillingly
Our halls have missed so long. To

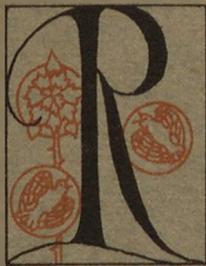
welcome him,

A Festival of Song have we ordained.









ich the reward~ no bard in fair

Churingia

For such a guerdon ever did
contend.

What minstrel in this strife of
song shall win

Your favour, and as victor be acclaimed,
On him my niece, your **P**rincess, shall
bestow

This prize~ **W**hate'er he will let him
demand;

And if it lie within my power, **I** pledge
My word that he shall have his heart's
desire.





ow I declare the theme to which,
in order,
As falls the lot, ye shall address
your art.
Which of ye all can best expound
in song

Love's inmost meaning and essential
grace—

His be the prize! So, noble singers, on!
Set hand to harp, and think upon your
loves!

And, be assured, albeit one alone
May win the prize, yet we to each and all
Who for our solace join this gentle fray,
Do render equal thanks." So spake the
Prince,





nd when his words were ended,
forth there stepped
Four pages who among the min-
strels went,
And in a golden bowl bade each
man drop

His written name. Before Elisabeth
One laid the folded lots - she drew - the page,
Reading the name it bore, proclaimed
aloud:-

"Wolfram von Eschenbach, begin the
Strife!"



Then Wolfram rose, struck his harp, and
sang:—



When round I gaze upon
This throng so gracious,
What wondrous sight doth
make my heart to glow?
So many heroes, gallant,
brave, sagacious,
A grove of mighty oaks that proudly
grow!

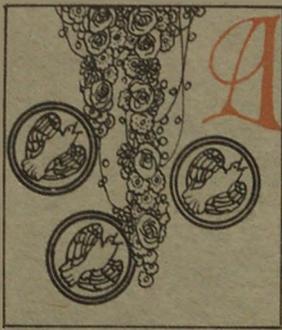


And like a wreath of sweet
and lovely flowers
I see around me noble
dame and maid—
That sight of splendour
dazeth all my powers;
My song is hushed—my harp aside
is laid.



But, lo! amid this dazzling
constellation
A softer radiance, like
The Evening Star!
Here sinks my soul in
prayer and adoration
And feels its gentle influence from
afar.

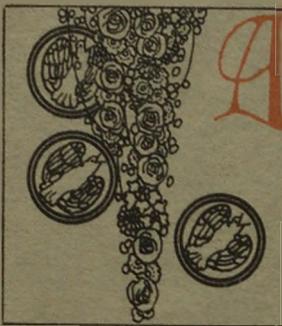




As if before a fairy fountain
kneeling

My spirit in its lucent
depths doth gaze,
And draweth from its wa-
ters draughts of healing

Wherewith my heart its burning
thirst allays.



Oh, never, fount most inno-
cent and holy

Shall thou be troubled by
an impious hand.

My love is self-denying,
pure, and lowly,

To serve and suffer is its sole
demand!

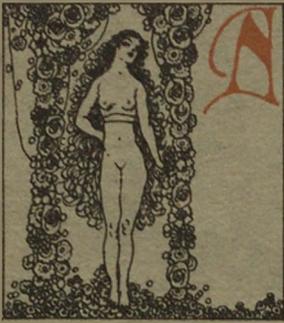
*Nobles! in this my song my meaning see-
The essence of true love is Purity!*





hen sweetly knights and ladies
each to each
Murmured their praises, while
some inly smiled.
But on Cannhäuser's brow, as
Wolfram sang,
Impatience gloomed; his thoughts went
darkling back
To when he learned the lore of love; and
pale
And bloodless, lacking the rich stain of
life,
Seemed to him now the pure, high strain
he heard.
He grasped his harp, and words that
seemed to rise
He knew not whence, came pouring from
his lips:—





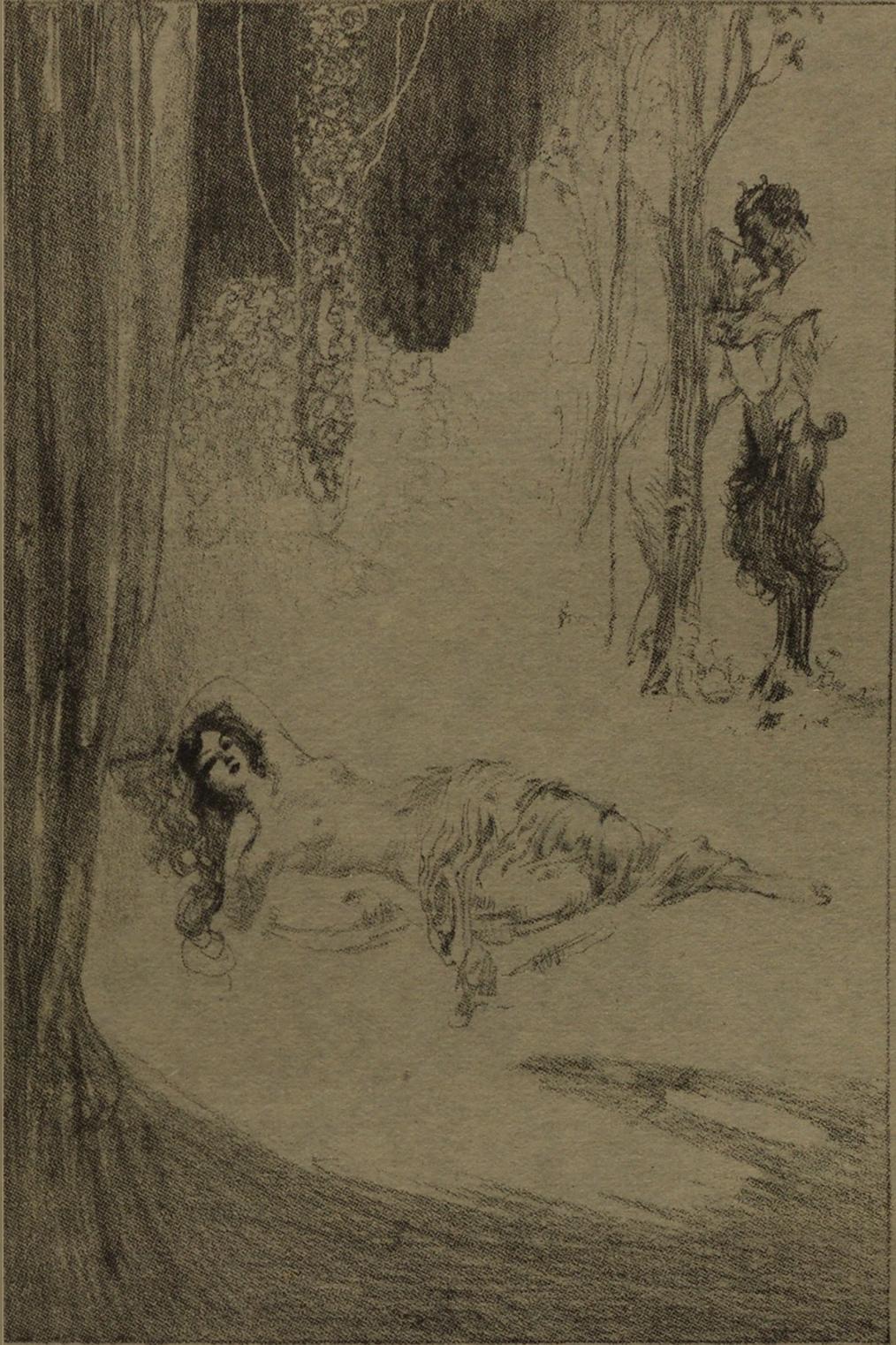
ay, Wolfram, what thy song
inspires
Is nought but love's pale
effigy!
If thus we pine in vain
desires

A desert soon the world will be.
To God alone be prayer and homage
given!

Behold his stars! Behold His boundless
heaven!

Adore such marvels high and strange
That lie beyond your reason's range!
But what doth yield to your embraces,
What lies the heart and senses near,
What tenderly with yours enlaces,
A human body, sweet and dear -
This waketh passion beyond measure;
And love is passion - love is pleasure!







o praises now were heard—silent
and thrilled

The great assemblage sat.

Elisabeth

Wide-eyed, bewildered, gazed
upon her knight.

But Biterolf, the fierce and arrogant,
Rose with a clash of ringing chords, and
sang

In accents harsh his rude, imperious
strain:—





We, one and all, hurl thee
defiance!
Who could be silent, hearing
thee?
Though mad with haughty
self-reliance
Hear me, blasphemer!—also me!



Doth love divine my soul in-
spire?
To quell my lady's slan-
derer
My sword leaps out—my
heart's on fire—
My very life I give for her!



For love of woman pure and
noble
My sword I'll ever gladly
draw.
Thy wanton lays and joys
ignoble
Are cheap and vile—not worth a straw!





grey old wolf," **C**annhäuser
cried, "dost thou
Presume to sing of love? **W**hat
can'st thou know
Of love's delight?—in truth not
worth a straw!"—

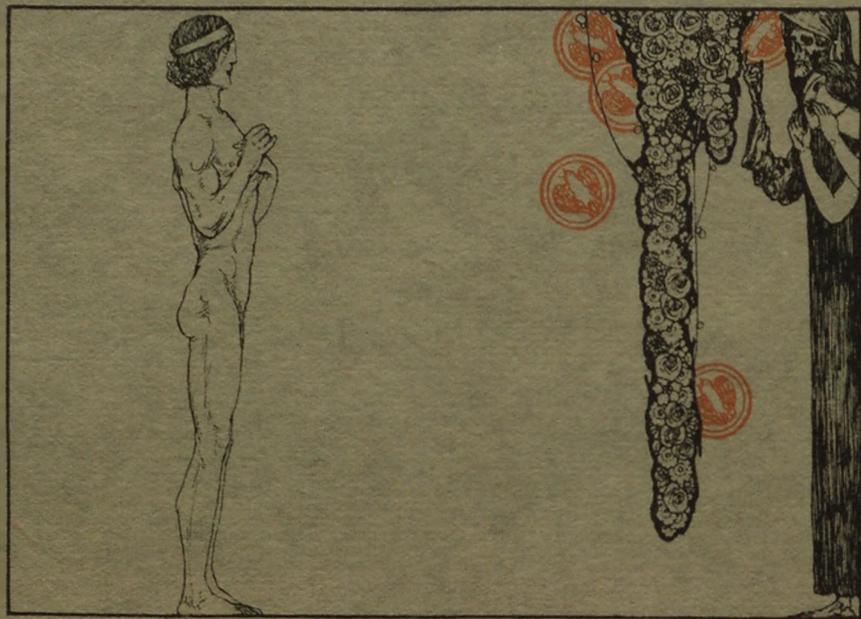
Thus taunt on taunt on **B**iterolf he hurled,
And soon the hall with clamour rang—the
knights

And spearmen of the **L**andgraf crowded in
Where **B**iterolf's bared steel above the
throng

Flashed, as he strove to reach his foe;
who stood

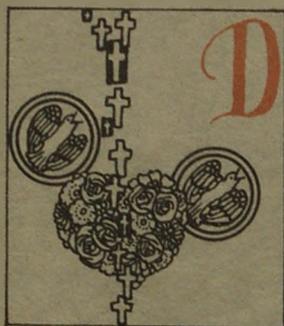
Unmoved and pale, with eyes that seemed
to look,

Beyond the living world, on things unseen.





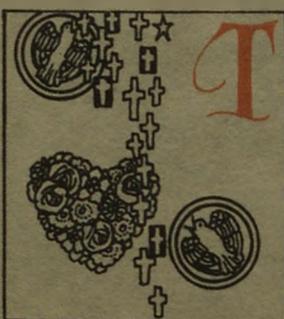
*Then soared above the din a voice that
hushed
Its stormy waves—'twas Wolfram's; and
he sang:—*



Dear God, I pray Thee now
inspire
And consecrate my heart
and song!
Afar be sinful low desire
From all this pure and
noble throng!



O Love, divine, eternal,
My song shall Thee extol;
Who, clothed in light su-
pernal
Hath visited my soul.



To guide me thou wast
given;
I follow Thee afar—
Thou leadest me to
Heaven
Where ever shines Thy
star.



hen rolled applausive thunder
round the **H**all.

But like a man distraught or
demon-driven

Tannhäuser sprang before the
Landgraf's throne.

Wild were his looks, and wild and strange
the notes

Chat, fraught with rapture sweet yet
horrible,

Broke on the silent, awed, revolted throng:—





Goddeſs! to thee my ſoul
hath vowed her duty.
Thy praiſe alone be hence
forth ſung by me!
Thou art the only fount of
Love and beauty:

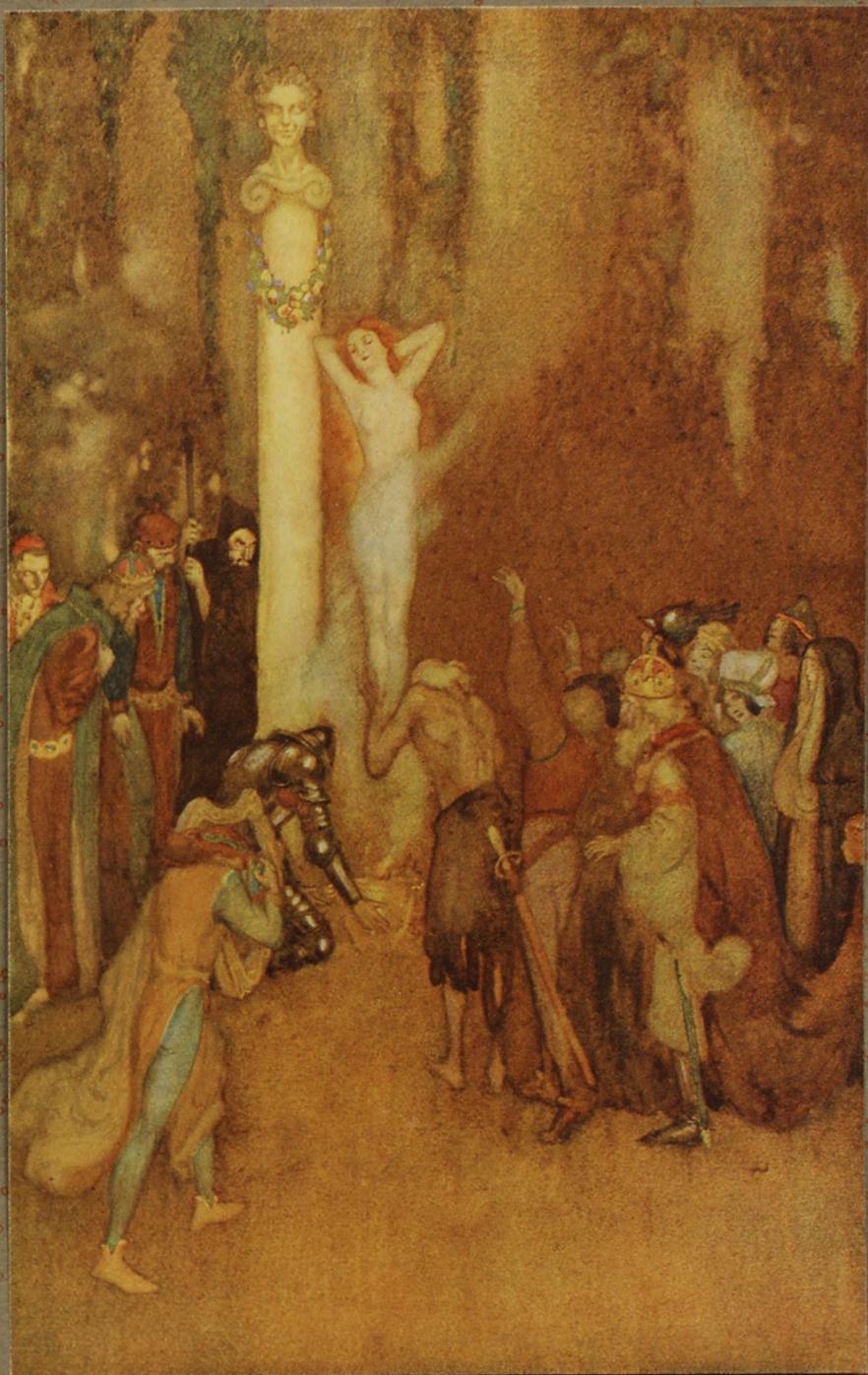
All gifts of grace and favour flow from thee
Who thee in paſſion's rapture hath
embraced

Hath learned the joys of love none
else can know.

Poor fools, who love have never
dared to taſte,

Go-ſeek it in the Hill of Venus-Go!









*s suddenly from out a thunder-
cloud
Leaps the red flame—and for a
moment all
Is silent;—then with the terrific
peal*

*The solid earth is shaken—so flamed forth
That word of horror, and a silence fell,
While motionless, as gorgon-struck to stone,
All gazed upon the singer standing there
Defiant;*





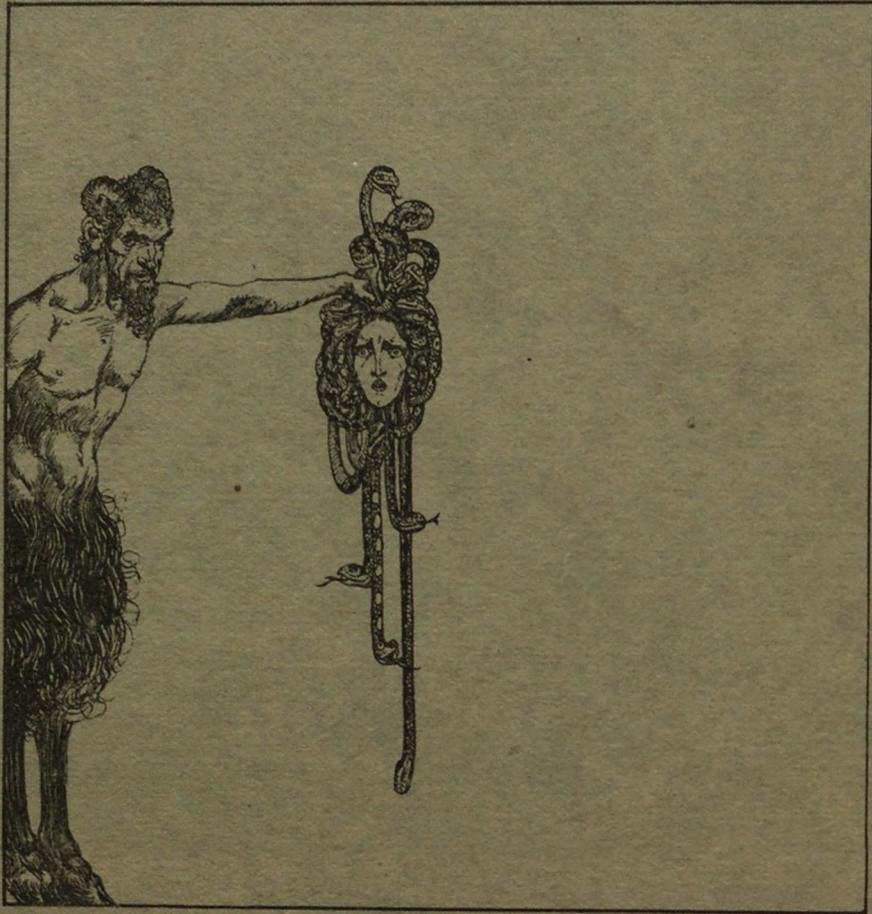
hen like sudden thunder crashed
Their voices: "Harken to the
traitor! Hark!

'Tis in the Hill of Venus he hath
dwell!

Away with him! Death to the
sinner! Death!"

Thus cried the men, and all the women
rising

In pale confusion cried "Away! away!"

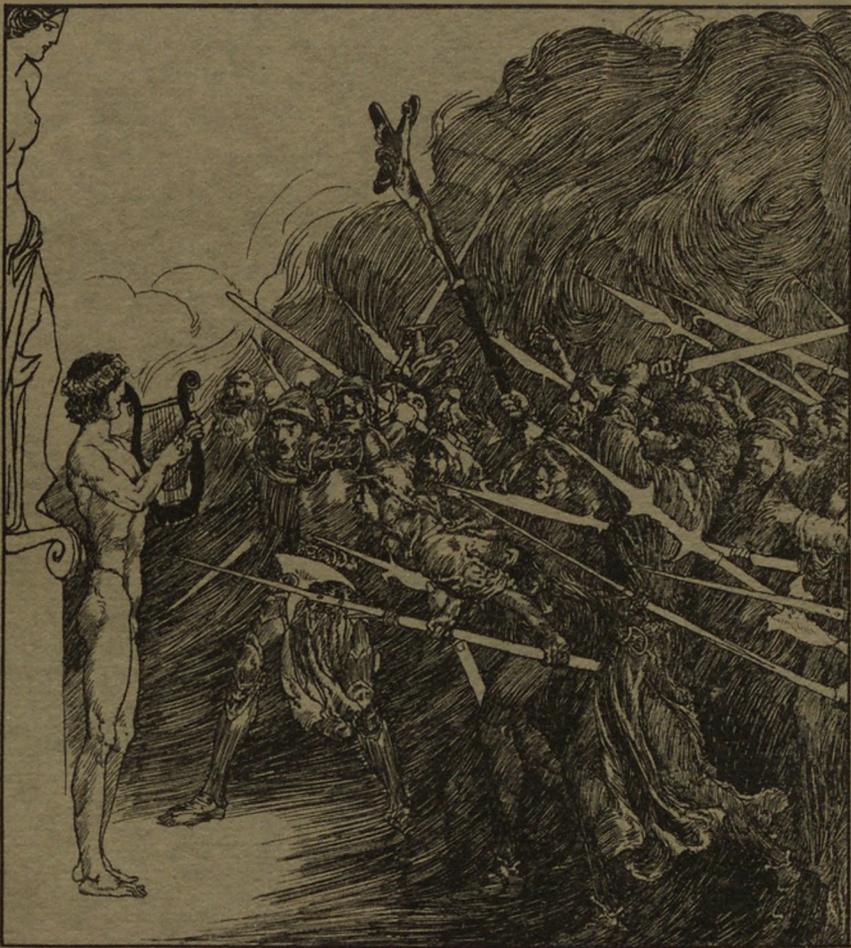




nd thronged toward the doors,
while high and higher
The fury of the storm of outcries
rose;

And ever nearer round that
silent man,

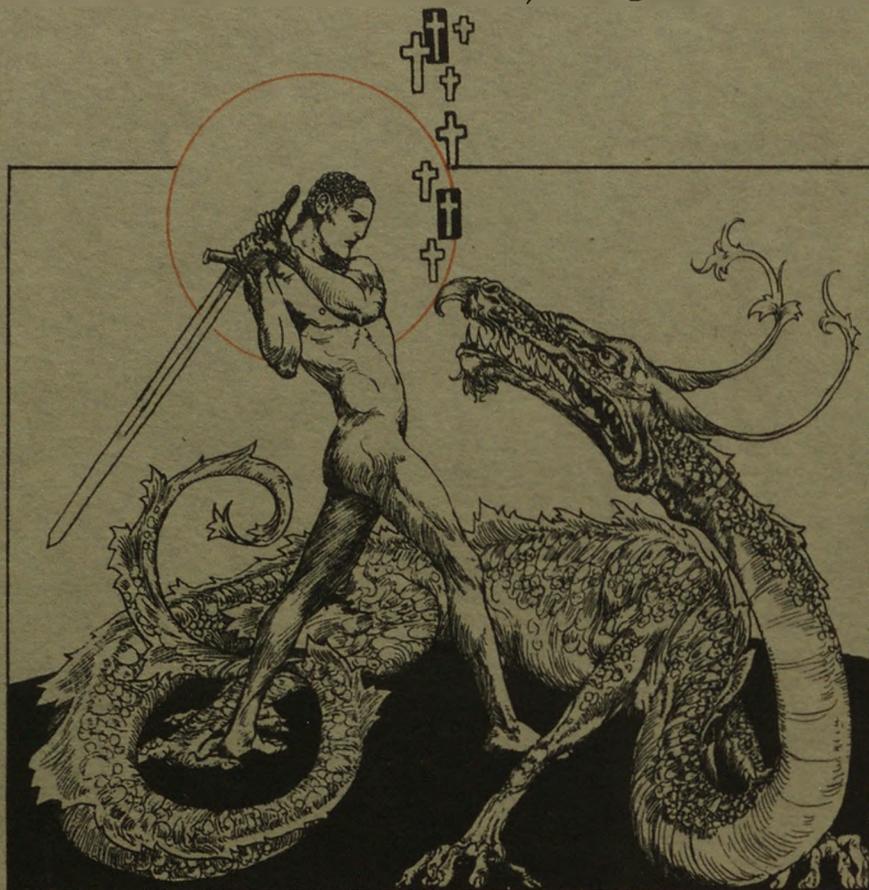
(As round the lover of Furydice
The Thracian Maenads) raged the
madden'd crowd:-

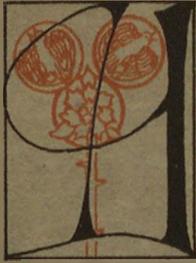




He heard it! heard his lips proclaim
That fearful sin—that cursed name!
Ah, shame, to share the joys of hell
And in the Hill of Venus dwell!
Foul sin, accursed for evermore!
Smite him, and bathe your blades
in gore!

Smite, smite the outlaw, smite amain,
And hurl his soul to hell again!





*He gazed as though he saw them
not, his eye
Filled with strange light, while
ever nearer gleamed
The pitiless steel. One moment
more,
A blade had flashed into his heart—but
hung
Suspended, motionless. . . then slowly
sank,
Sank ever slowly downward:—for behold,
Facing the murderer, with flashing eyes
And arm uplifted, stood Elisabeth.*





here fell a sudden hush: then

Hermann spake:—

“Elisabeth! What means it? . . .

Thou! . . . Dost thou,

A modest maiden, shield so foul
a sin?”

“Oh stay!” she cried. “Or smite, if smite
ye will,

Me! . . . Nought I reck of death. Your
steel can strike

No wound so deadly, none, as he hath
struck.”





stounded at her words another
spake,
And then another— till a tumult
rose
of angry voices: “Daughter of
the land,

What mad infatuation seizeth thee,
Thus to avert the punishment from one
Who also thee so terribly betrayed?”





think not of myself," she said.

"Of him

I think, and his salvation. Would
ye wish

His soul's eternal ruin?" "Nay,"
they cried,

'Tis he himself hath ruined it! His soul

Is lost for ever—every hope is dead—

The curse of heaven hath struck him.

Let him go!

Let him be hurled with all his sins to
hell."





With gleaming swords uplifted once
again

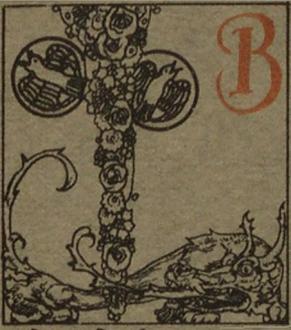
They forward pressed. But calm-
ly fronting them,

"Back! back!" she cried. "'Tis
not for you to judge!

Have you no hearts? Down with the savage
sword!

And learn from me the gracious will of
God!





Behold the maid whose
happiness
He plucked - to cast away
again!
I gave him (yea, I will con-
fess)
That heart he broke in light disdain.



And yet I beg that he may
live
And yet alone for sin and
pride;
Cill faith at last assurance
give
That e'en for him the Saviour died.





While yet she spake—while yet the
gracious words
still lingered lovingly upon her
lips—

Behold, the man who proudly
there had stood

In fierce defiance of his murderers,
was kneeling at her feet and murmuring
words of abasement:—“God be merciful!
O God, forgive my madness and my sin!”







hen *Hermann* spake: "*Madness*
indeed, and sin!

She came, as 'twere an angel
sent by heaven,

To save thee, dastard! *And,*
behold, she begs

The life of him whose treason dealt her
death.

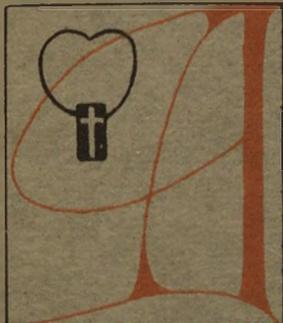
Ah shameless traitor! . . . *Yet—* though
nevermore

Such crime can *I* forgive—to disobey

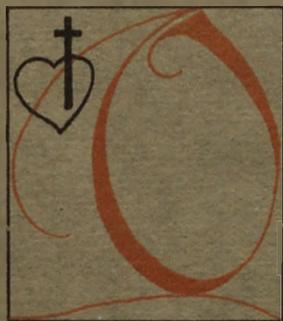
The message *God* hath sent by her,
I dare not."



*And, ever humbly kneeling, spake again
That other, looking upward, as in prayer:*



Messenger so pure, so gra-
cious,
From heaven to save my soul
was sent;
And yet with thoughts im-
pure, audacious,
My sinful eyes on her I bent.



Thou, whose mercy sent for
my salvation
Thine angel down from lu-
cent heights above,
Forgive me! Save my soul
from hell's damnation;
Ah God! Let penitence Thy pity move!



*He ceased, and all were silent. Then once
more
The Landgraf Hermann spake:—*



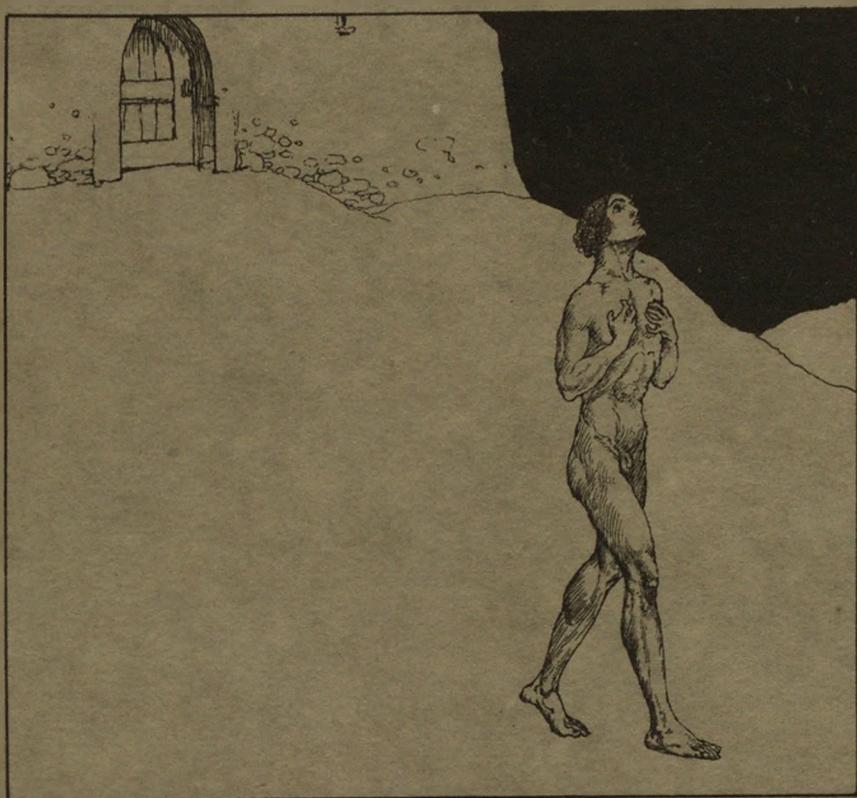
*foul, dread crime
Hath been committed, Hither,
unto us,
A thrice accursed son of sin
hath stolen
In crafty false disguise.*





Now listen, traitor!
We cast thee forth from us. Thou
shalt with us
No longer stay. Polluted is our hearth
By thee, and heaven itself frowns
threateningly

Upon this roof, that shelters thee too long,
And yet... will'st thou escape from woes eterne,
One road still open stands. I cast thee out,
But point thee thither. Use it! Save thy soul!





From all the provinces beneath
my rule

Are gathering many pilgrim pen-
itents.

Already have the elder southward
marched,

But companies of younger pilgrims still
Encamp within the vale of Eisenach.

To Rome's high, sacred festival of grace

These pious men are drawn by penitence,

Because their hearts no other peace can find;

Disquieted perchance by sins of which

The worst were holy deeds compared with
thine.





ill thou with these to Rome
make pilgrimage,
Unto that city of the grace of
God,
And there do penance in the
dust, and bow

humbly before the judgment seat of him
Whose voice is God's - and promise to return
Never, if he refuse to give thee blessing -
Then . . . go!"

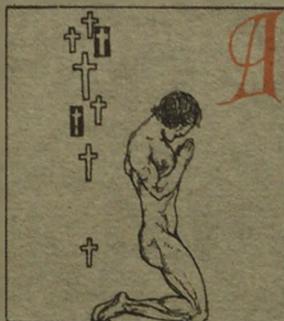




nd all the others echoed "Go!"
"Yea," said Elisabeth, "and all
my life
shall be a prayer that God
forgive his sin,
And bring him back from
darkness unto light."

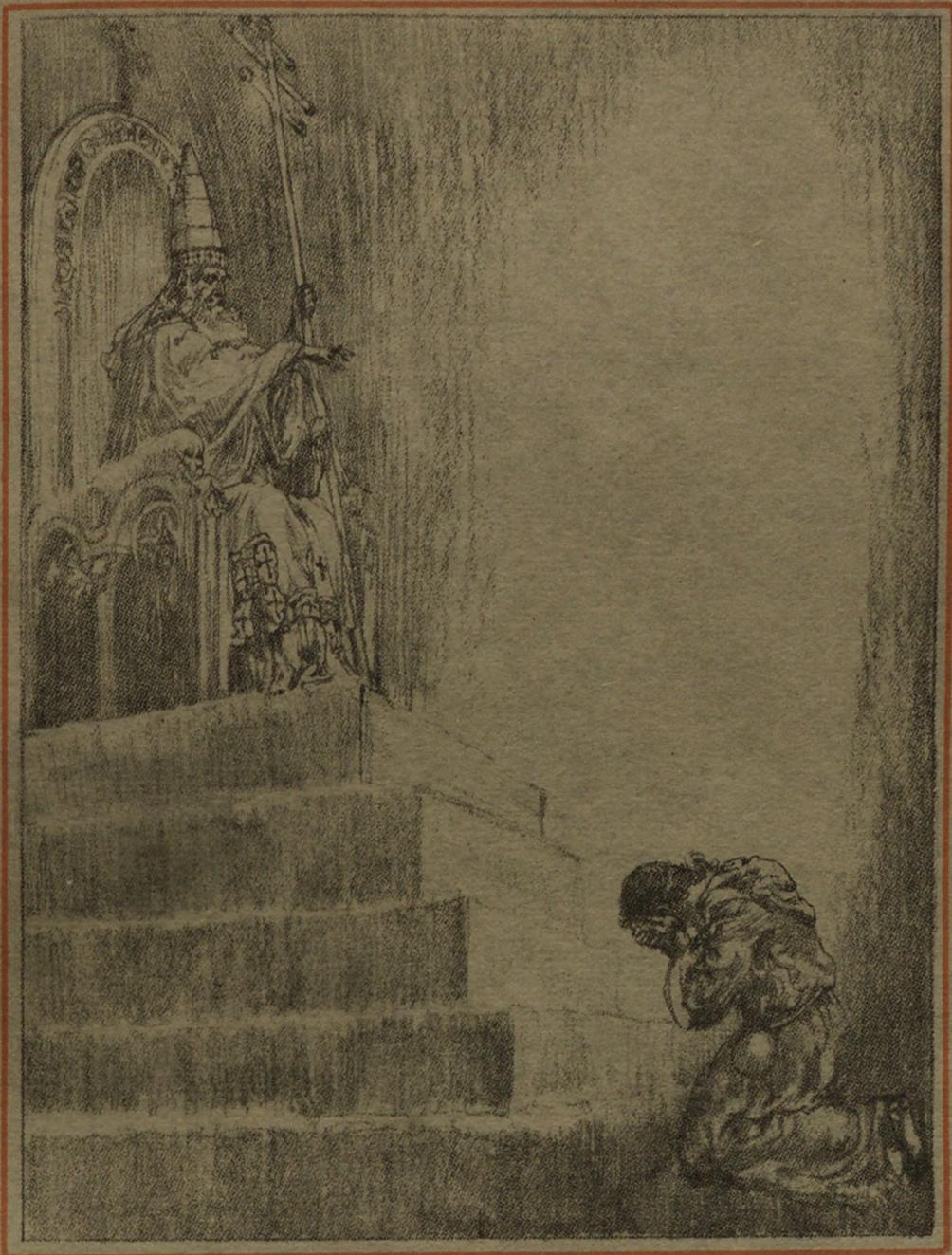


*While from the valley floating upward
came
Faint echoes of the chant the Pilgrims
sang:*



*And at the festival of grace
will humbly soon myself
abase;
for he who steadfast faith
attains
By penitence salvation
gains."*





Part V The Pilgrim.





In the red western sky the
autumn sun
Is setting, and the golden
glory dies
From off the russet woods;
a paler gleam
Lingers awhile amid the
sombre pines

And dark ravines of frowning **H**örselberg,
While through the evening air come
mingled sounds

Of lowing herds and distant vesper bells.





Descending from the Wartburg's
castled crag

Through chestnut woods and
hazel thickets winds

A narrow path, which soon doth
lose itself

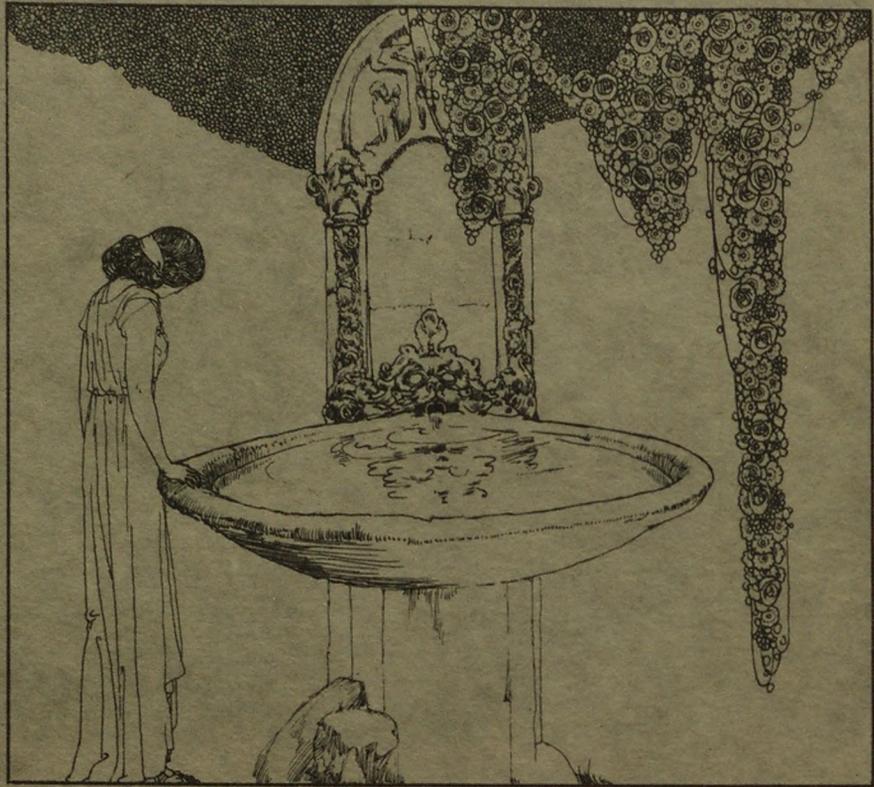
Within a glade that gently downward slopes

To grassy meadows and the valley stream.

Here, nigh the border of the wood, there
stands,

O'er canopied by mighty boughs, a
fount

With moss grown basin,





And anigh the fount
A little rustic shrine—from whence
is viewed

The long white road that gleams
along the vale.

It is the hush of evening; far
and wide

Spreads the deep calm; the vesper bell
hath ceased;

No living creature seems to stir; the leaf
Hangs motionless, soft-murmuring the
stream

Glides past with darkening wave—





hen, list, a sound
of steps approaching. Through
the woodland glade
A solitary man descends. He bears
The harp and raiment of a
knightly bard;

But stern and sorrowful his face—no more
The bright and happy mien of him who
sang
Of love and joy. Wolfram of Eschenbach.







nd now, as nigh the rustic shrine
he drew

He stayed his steps, and gazed,
and murmured low:

"Ah yes! I thought to find her
here in prayer,

As oft before, when hither valley-ward
I wandered down the woodland slope alone.





es- there she kneels, bowed down
by anguish sore,
Pierced to the heart, like *Mary-*
and for him,
For him, that struck the blow,
she intercedes!

O wondrous and eternal power of love!
She watches here in hope from day to day
To see the pilgrims coming back from
Rome.
And soon they should return.





*he woods begin
To lose their leaves. . . And he?
Will also he
Return with those forgiven peni-
tents?*

*This is her only prayer and
supplication.*

*And, O ye saints, I pray, fulfil her prayer!
Yea, though this wound of mine shall
never heal,
Grant that her sorrow may be turned to
joy!"*





'en while the words he murmured,
distantly
A sound of many voices singing
rose,
A nd ever louder swelled the
joyous song:



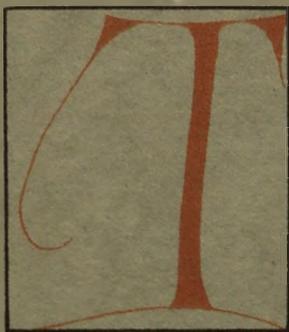
Happiness! Again I come
To thy fair meads, beloved
home!
My staff may now aside
be laid.
My pilgrim-vow to heaven
is paid.





My penance did forgiveness
win;
The Lord hath pardoned all
my sin,
The Lord to whom my songs
resound

My sorrows with His blessings crowned.



To souls repentant grace
is given;
They gain at last the joys
of heaven.
And so I fear not hell nor
death,

But praise my God while I have breath.





While yet the first faint music from
afar

Came floating through the woods,
she rose. With eyes

A light with sudden happiness,
she scanned

The long white road that gleams along the
vale.

"'Tis they," she cried "It is the pilgrim
song!

Ye saints, O help me! Let me clearly know
The will of God, and give me strength to
do it!"





And soon beneath that little grassy
knoll

With homeward-hastening steps
and joyous song

The pilgrim band came marching
merrily.

They came - they passed -









nd, as they passed, she stood
Gazing; and all the light within
her eyes

Faded away and died. "He is
not come,"

With quivering lips she said-then
turned and knelt,

And as a flower that bends before a storm
She bowed her head in silence-



*While again,
But fainter, rose the pilgrims' happy song:*



*happiness! again I come
To thy fair meads, beloved
home!*

*My staff may now aside
be laid;*

*My pilgrim-vow to heaven
is paid.*

Then all again was still.



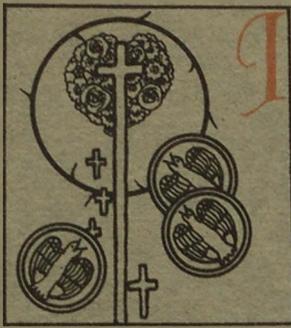
*A while she knelt
Amidst that utter silence; lifting then
Her tearful eyes, with trembling voice she
prayed:*



Almighty Maiden, I implore
Thee!
Thou Virgin blest, to thee
I pray!
While here in dust I kneel
before thee,

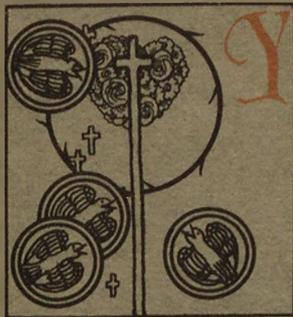
O Take me from the earth away!
And like an angel pure and bright
Receive me in thy realm of light.





If ever foolish, fond desires
Have turned my heart
away from thee,
If sinful thoughts that earth
inspires
Have ever come and
tempted me,
I battled then with anguish sore
Till from my soul the sin I tore.





Yet many a sin must be
forgiven,
Since ne'er can I atone
for all—
O let me come to thee in
heaven

And as thy handmaid humbly fall
And kneel before thy holy throne
To pray for him— for him alone!

*Again she bowed her head in grief and
prayer.*

*And Wolfram reverently drawing nigh
Kneel there;*





nd when at last she rose, his eyes
Sought hers entreatingly, for
much he yearned
To speak some word of comfort-
yea, the word
Trembled upon his lips. But
silently

She passed and left him. For awhile he stood
As lost in thought; then stepping from
the shade
Of the deep wood, he gazed around, and
spake:





As the chill gloom that heralds
death, the night
Comes creeping up the valley,
and enfolds
Height after height within its
robe of darkness.

The soul that yearns to reach that lucent
heaven

Fears through the dark, dread shade to
wing her flight.

But lo,—the loveliest of all the stars!

It sendeth down to earth its gentle light

To pierce the darkness and to light my
way

From out this vale of gloom.”

He spake, but still
He lingered, gazing heav'nward. Then his
hand

Sought for his harp and softly touched
the strings;



*And as a bark o'er moonlit water moves,
So moving on the music's silver stream
Floated with gentle rise and fall his voice:*



Fair evening star, so pure
and bright,

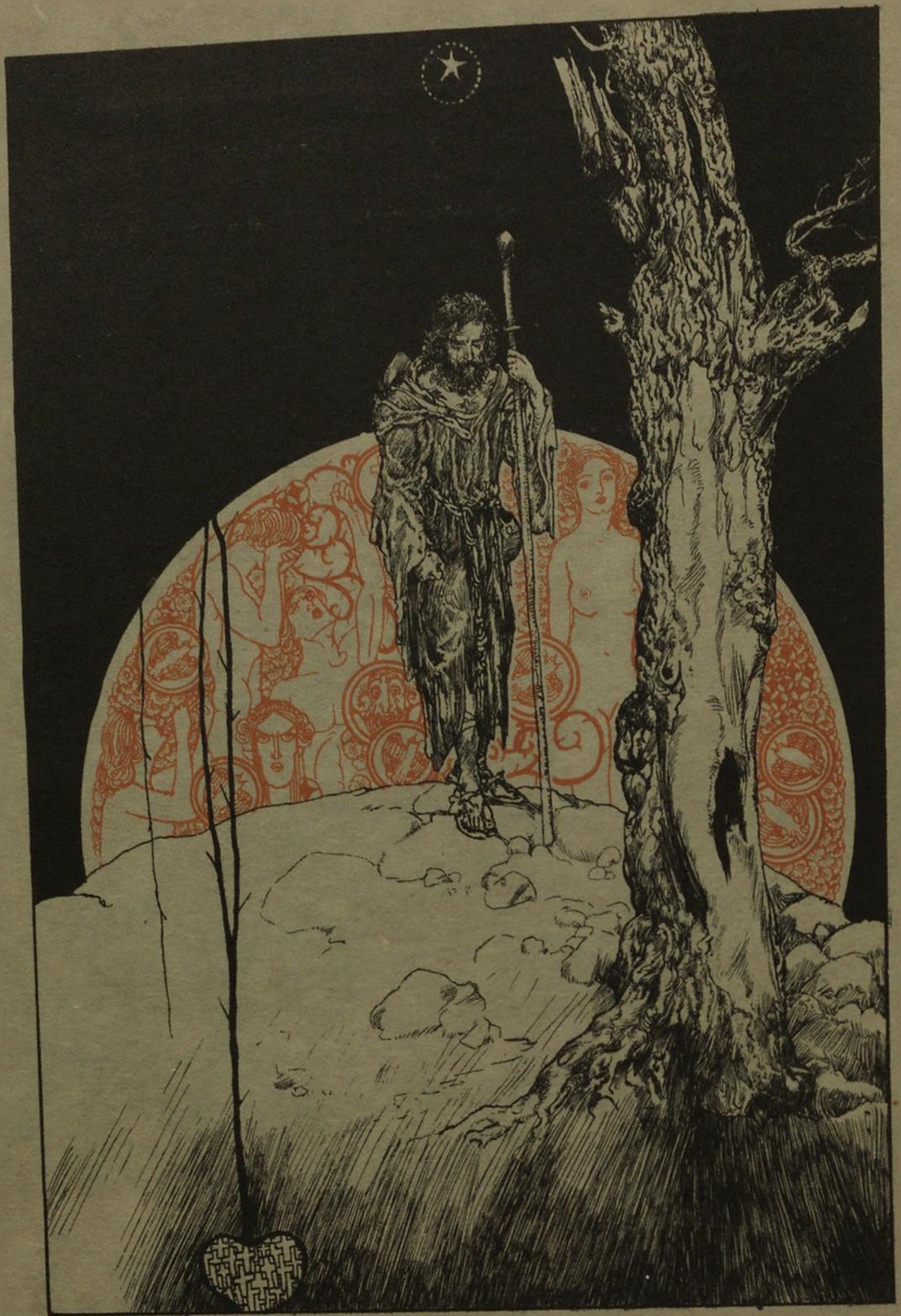
I greet once more thy
gentle light.

Greet thou, whene'er she
pass, the maid

Whom ne'er my constant heart betrayed,
When, soaring from this vale of sadness,
She joins the angels in their gladness.









He ceased—and softly down the
darkened vale
The music died away. But still
he gazed
To where amid the glow of sunset
hung

Like to a glimmering pearl the *Star of
Love.*

Then with a sigh he turned away—and, lo,
Above the serried pines of *Hörselberg*
Was rising, mid a silvery cloud, the moon;
And all at once the long white valley-road
Gleamed forth amid the darkness. Then
he marked

With slow and weary footsteps drawing
near

A solitary man in pilgrim's garb—
For such it seemed, though rent and
travel-stained

And worn as if in mockery.





nigh

He paused, and like a man who
sees once more

Some dear familiar scene, and
doubtfully

Gazes around, still fearing lest he
dream—

So gazing round him doubtfully he stood;
Then spake: "I heard the music of a harp;
How sad it sounded! Sure, it cannot be
That she--" He ended not, but turned
surprised,

For Wolfram spake: "Who art thou,
wanderer

That wendest thus thy solitary way?"
"Thou bidd'st me tell my name," he
answered. "Well!

I'll tell thee thine instead—for thou art
Wolfram,
The skilful bard."





einrich!" the other cried
Astounded. "Heinrich! Thou!
What bringeth thee
Hither? Thou camest not with
the pilgrim band
Of penitents forgiven. How
dost thou dare
Thus unabsolved with dese-

crating foot
This soil again to press?" "Allay thy
fears!"

Cannhäuser smiling said. "Allay thy
fears,

My worthy bard! I come not here to seek
Thee,—no, nor any of thy brotherhood.

Yet someone here I seek—some friend to
show me,

The road that once so easily I found."

"What road?" asked Wolfram, and Cann-
häuser cried

In bitter reckless scorn, "To Venus Hill,"





A! impious wretch, pollute not
thus mine ear!"

Wolfram exclaimed. **T**hen: "Art
thou thither drawn?
Chither again?" "Ay, verily!" he
said,

With a light laugh, "and thou shalt be my
guide!

Thou know'st the path, **I** ween!" "Peace,
madman! **P**ease!"

The other answered. "Horror seizeth me
Hearing thy words. **W**here wast thou?

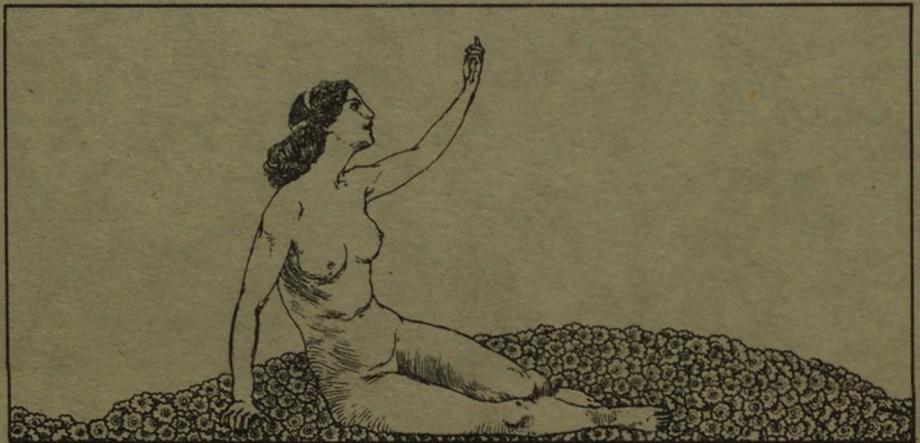
Did'st thou not
Make pilgrimage to **R**ome?" **T**hen with
fierce eyes

That haggard wayworn man a moment
glared:

"**S**peak not of **R**ome" he cried. **A**nd

Wolfram asked
With trembling voice: "Thou did'st not
then attend

The festival of grace?"





*Silent he stood,
That wretched man, then spake
in fierce, low tones
That ever higher, louder, fiercer
rose:*

*“Well, Wolfram hear! Yea thou
alone shalt hear it.*

*But come not nearer, for the very ground
whereon I tread is curst. Stand back!-
but listen!*

*With fervour, such as never penitent
Had felt before, the road to Rome I trod.
My pride of sin, my arrogance, was spent,
Healed by that messenger who came from
God.*

*For her dear sake I donned the pilgrim's
dress,*

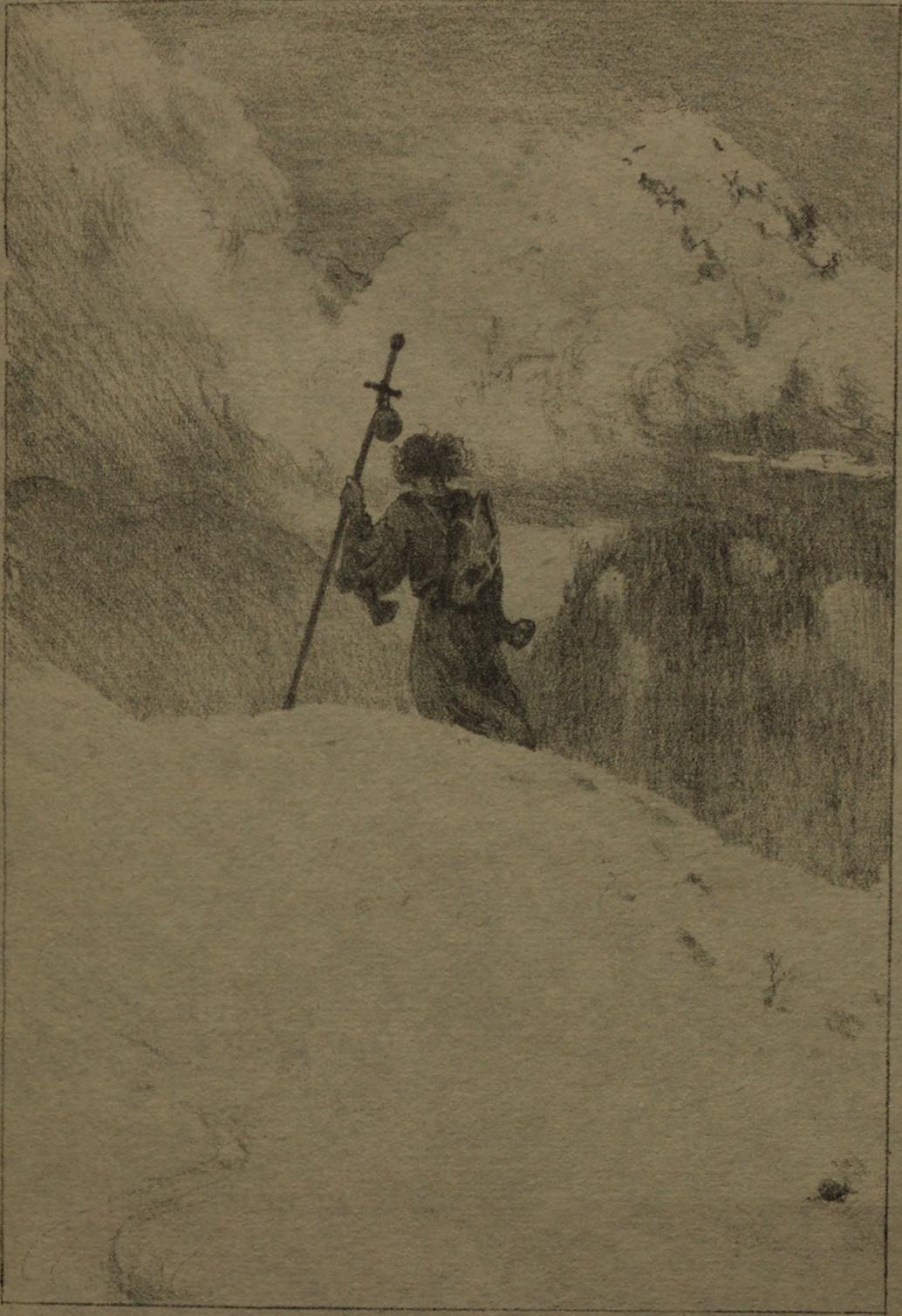
*To sue for grace denied, and pardon win,
That thus I might assuage the bitterness
Of all the tears wherewith she wailed my
sin.*





*I*l toils a fellow pilgrim's piety
*M*ight choose to suffer, seemed
too light to me;
*W*hene'er he trod the yielding
meadow-brink,
I sought with naked sole the thorn
and stone,
*W*hene'er at some cool fount he stooped to
drink,
I quaffed the sunlight's fiery wine alone.
*W*hene'er in pious mood he knelt to pray,
I gave to *G*od my blood as sacrifice;
*W*hen in the *H*ospice warmly couched he
lay,
I made my bed amid the snow and ice.
*W*ith eyes intent her beauty not to see
*A*s blind *I* passed thro' lovely *I*taly.







So unto holy Rome I came, and
there
Upon the sacred threshold sank
in prayer.
As morning brake amidst the
bells' glad ringing,
While heavenly tones came floating from
above,
Burst forth in joy ten thousand voices
singing
To greet the message of God's grace and
love,
Then him I saw to whom on earth is given
To speak as God. All knelt in reverence.
He gave them absolution. Thousands,
shriven,
Arose exulting and departed thence.





hen *I* approaching him, with head
low bowed

And signs of penitence, my sin
avowed;

How evil passions aid my heart
inspire,

And longings which no penance had allayed;
I begged release from bonds that burnt
like fire,

And, wild with pain, for grace and pardon
prayed.

Then he whom thus *I* supplicated spoke:-



Have godless passions, lusts of hell
won thee in Venus' Hill to dwell

*Thou'*rt damned to all eternity!

Sooner this staff on which *I* lean
Shall deck itself in tender green,
Than hope of grace shall bloom

for thee.





eized by despair *I* sank, o'er-
whelmed, confounded,
*A*nd swooned away; and when
I woke, the light
was gone, and o'er the empty
square reigned night,

*W*hile from afar the pilgrims' songs re-
sounded.

*T*hen loathing and despair came over me-
*T*his lying promise of felicity-

*T*his pious song! *M*y very soul it froze.

I shuddered; then, as seized with madness,
rose

*A*nd fled - to seek the love, the joy once
more

*W*hich on *H*er bosom *I* had found before.



*Y*ea, Venus, unto thee my
Queen, *I* come!

*T*hy magic power shall my
salvation be!

*T*hy realms of night shall
ever be my home,

*T*hine is my love to all eternity!"





through accents of despair and
fierce contempt
Higher and higher the storm of
passion rose
Triumphant. Fiercely from his
eyes there flashed

A strange unearthly light- And Wolfram
shrank

In horror, hoarsely crying "Cease! Refrain!
Unhappy one, refrain!"

But still the song,
Wild as the chant of Pythian priestess, rose
In tones of passionate, appealing love:





Must I seek thee vainly,
goddess dear!
I found thee once so soon,
so easily!
How all the world hath
curs'd me thou dost hear—
O sweet one, help me! lead me back
to thee!

Ah! gentle, balmy airs around me
move!

Hark! hearest thou not the sounds
of dance and song
That call to revelry and joys of love!
It is the nymphs, the Bacchant's
festal throng!"







adman!" the other cried. "Thou knowest not

On whom thou call'st! Quick!

Hither! Come to me!

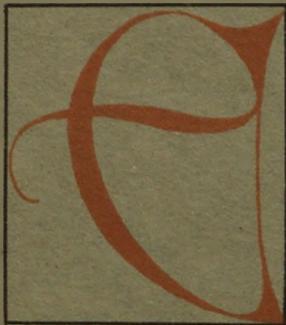
Or thou art lost for ever! . .

How his breast

Heaves madly! . . God! Some hellish influence

Is here at work, and fiends around us hover!"

But ever higher rose th' impassioned song:



Ecstatic raptures all my senses overwhelm,

When once again this twilight soft I see.

Hail, hail, of joy and love the magic realm!

Where once I tasted love's reality!"



*And, hark! as siren-music sweet, a voice
Came floating like an echo from afar:*



*elcome again, thou fickle,
faithless man!
Since nought thou find'st
but pitiless disdain,
Nought but the world's
contempt and pious ban;
Thou long'st for love within mine arms
again!"*

*As when by holy Mary's image
kneels*

*He suppliant, he lowly bowed
and cried:*

*"O lady Venus, pitiful and great,
I come to thee! Be thou com-
passionate!"*

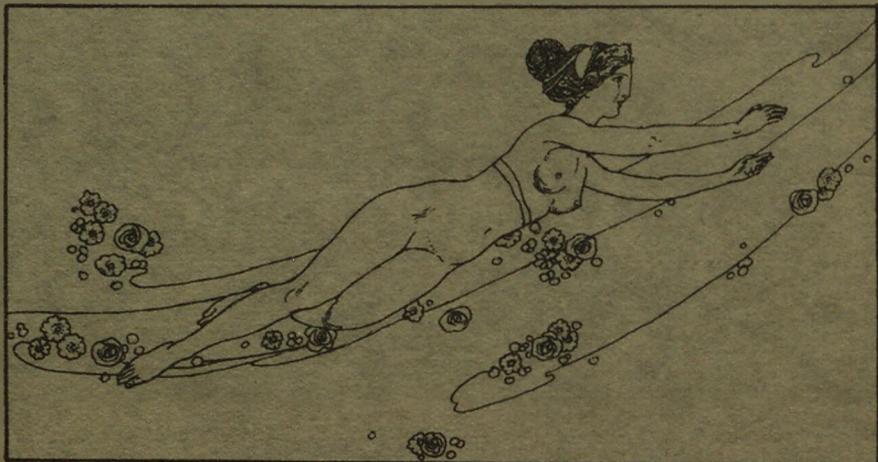


*Then softly floating like an echo came
Again the music of that siren-voice:*



*Art thou returned once more
For love of me,
Forgiven be thy faithless,
proud disdain!
Deep founts of joy are thine
eternally,
For never shalt thou part from me
again!"*

*As touched by an enchanter's wand he
stood
Trembling in silent rapture, slowly then
Outstretched blind hands that seemed to
grope their way
Towards a vision that his dazzled eyes
Scarce dared to look on-*





huddering then, but with
Undaunted heart, Wolfram before
him strode.

"Avaunt!" he cried, "ye Powers
of Hell, nor seek
To ensnare in your foul foils this
spirit pure!"

But he: "In vain, in vain!—the doom of
hell

Is mine—then let its joys be mine as well!"
"O God Almighty!" pleaded Wolfram's voice,
"Be merciful and help his great despair,
For Thou art greater than the human
heart

And knowest that he loves Thee . . .
Heinrich! list!

List but a word! God's mercy yet will save
thee!"

Thus gently pleading, on the other's arm
He laid his hand;





*T*annhäuser shuddered back
As from the touch of some cold
deadly thing—
“Speak not of **G**od or heaven,” he
fiercely cried.
“**I** have no **G**od, no heaven— but
Her alone!

*She calls me—yea and **I** will go to **H**er!”
“**C**o **H**er!” spake **W**olfram. “**O**nce for thee
on earth*

*An angel prayed, . . . and soon . . . yea,
even now*

*Perchance, she watches as a blessed spirit
Above thee . . . **H**ark! **T**he solemn **R**equiem!
'Tis she . . . **E**lisabeth **H**er soul hath left
Chat suffering frame, and wings its way
to heaven!*

***T**hy angel kneels before the throne of **G**od,
And thou art saved!”*





ven as he spoke the word
Came floating like an echo from
afar

A bitter, piercing cry, "Ah me!
ah me!

Lost, lost, forever lost!" -and
died away

In wailings, while that requiem chant
drew near.

Beside the bier with slow and solemn step
The black-cowled Brothers paced, while
side by side

Knelt the two friends; and with a voice
scarce heard

For sobs Cannhäuser cried "Elisabeth!
O blessed soul in heaven, pray for me!"

Even as he spake, the long-tormented heart
Broke, and among the flowers he fell, where
once

He heard the pilgrim's chant, and in an
hour

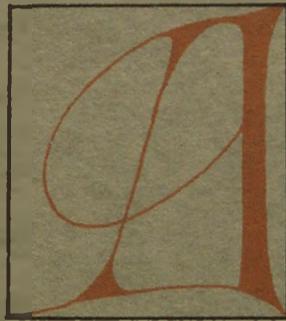
Heavy with destiny, he turned his back
Upon the thorny path of penitence.

And now upon his fading senses broke
That chant again, in glad, triumphant
tones.

And Wolfram, rising, marked with joy and
awe

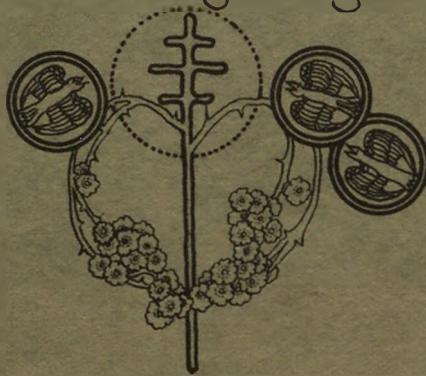


*A homeward-faring pilgrim band, who bore
A staff before them wreathed in budding
leaves,
And as they neared him, sang a wondrous
strain:*



All hail to God's redeeming
grace
That saves the sinful hu-
man race!
A miracle in holy night
He wrought to show His love
and might.

The priestly staff, all dry and dead,
With tender green hath blossomed;
So for the sinner now may bloom
Redemption from Hell's fiery doom.
Seek out the man in every place
Who won this miracle of grace!
God over all the world doth reign,
And none His mercy may restrain.







Too late" said **W**olfram "are ye
come: the soul
Hath learned from other lips the
grace divine."

Upon the dead man's bosom
reverently

They laid the budding staff; the funeral
train

Moved slowly onward. **O**ne frail form alone

The bearers carried from the **W**artburg's
gates,

But at the grave-side did the priest
devoutly

Commend with holy rites two souls to **G**od.







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