of supernatural events, but Tennyson considered these two metaphysical realms complementary, whereas Morris added explicit naturalistic explanations for Bellerophon's 'godlike' powers.

Other comparisons seem to me similarly pointed in their implications. Tennyson's epic cast Arthur as a military leader, but all his engagements were offstage. Bellerophon, by contrast, actively recruits, exhorts, heartens, and consoles his fellow-soldiers, and acts, in effect, as a remarkably mild-mannered Platonic 'guardian,' whose task it is—in his 'warrior'-phase—to confront the amorphous Chimaera.

These changes also anticipate the preoccupations of Love is Enough (1873), Morris's next long poem, as does Bellerophon's laconic characterization of the afterlife as a mirage: "Nor overmuch/ I fear or hope the gates of these [heaven and hell] to touch,/ Unless we twain be such men verily/ As on the earth make heaven and hell to be" (I. 2027-2030). His geocentrism also echoes the modesty of the larger cycle's "idle singer," whose opening words informed us that "Of heaven or hell I have no power to sing."

Both Philonoe and Bellerophon, finally, philosophize about the timeless recurrence of love and its power to free us for a time from the prison-house of eld and death. Bellerophon remarks at one point that human limitations "are the engines of the Gods, we,/ Through constant love, Gods too should come to be" (I. 827-28), and when Philonoe broods about its force within her, she speculates what will happen when she dies, and concludes that "love shall live which once was part of me" (I. 3051). Both suggest that "love" is a miniature eternity, the only one we will ever have.

See also Bellas, 176–83; Boos, 160–69; Calhoun, 208–209; Kirchhoff, 201–207; Oberg, 45–57; and Silver, 68, 73.

Manuscripts:
A pencil draft exists in British Library Add. M. S. 45,301, and the final copy for the printer in Huntington Library 6418.

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**BELLEROPHON IN LYCIA.**

The Argument.

**BELLEROPHON BORE UNAWARES TO JOBATES KING OF LYCIA THE DEADLY MESSAGE OF KING PRETUS:**
WHEREFORE THE LYCIAN KING THREW HIM OFTEN IN THE WAY OF DEATH, BUT THE FATES WILLED HIM NOT TO PERISH SO, BUT GAVE HIM RATHER GREAT HONOUR AND A HAPPY LIFE.

O ye have erst heard how
Bellerophon
Left Argos with his fortune all undone,
Well deeming why, and with a certain scorn,
Rather than anger, in his heart new-born,
To mingle with old courage, and the hope
That yet with life's wild tangle he might cope
Nor be so wholly beaten in the end.
Whatever pain he got from falling friend,
And earth made lonely for his feet again,
The brightness of his youth might nowise wane
Before it, or his hardihood grow dim.
So now the evening sun shines fair on him
In Lycia,1 as he goes up from the quays,
Well pleased beneath the new folk's curious gaze
With all the fair things that his eyes behold.
As goodly as the tale was that men told
Of King Jobates' city, goodlier
Than all they told it seemeth to him here,
And mid things new and strange and fairly wrought
Small care he hath for any anxious thought.

1Lycia: a mountainous Mediterranean country in southwest Asia Minor, whose inhabitants were greatly commended by all the ancients for their sobriety and justice (Lemm.rian), and whose name derived from the Athenian settler Lycus, son of Pandion. Two of their chieftains, Glauclus and Sarpedon (Bellerophon's grandson), fought as allies of Priam at Troy.
And so amid the shipmen's company
He came unto the King's hall, builded high
Above the market-place, and no delay
In getting speech of the great King had they,
For ever King Jobates' wont it was
To learn of new-comers things brought to pass
In outlands, and he served in noble wise
Such guests as might seem trusty to his eyes.
So in the midst of his company
He passed in through the hall, and seemed to be
A very god chance-come among them there,
Though little splendidly was his gear;
A bright steel helm upon his brows he had,
And in a dark blue kirtle was he clad,
And a grey cloak therewith; bright enow
With gold and gems his great sword's hilt did glow;"But no such thing was as aught else he wore;
A spear great-shafted his strong right hand bore,
And in his left King Proctus' casket shone:
Grave was his face now, though there played thereon
A flickering smile, that erst you might have seen
In such wise play, when small space was between
The spears he led and fierce eyes of the foe.

THUS through the Lycian court-folk did they go
Till to the King they came; e'en such a man
As sixty summers made not pinched or wan,
Though beard and hair alike were white as snow.
Down on the sea-farers did he gaze now
With curious peering eyes, and now and then
He smiled and nodded, as he saw such men
Amidst them as he knew in other days;
But when he met Bellerophon's frank gaze,
There his eyes rested, and he said: O guest,
Though among these thy gear is not the best,
Yet know I no man more if thou art not
E'en that Bellerophon, who late hast got
Such praise mid men of Argos, that thy name
Two months agoe to this our country came,
THEN sat Bellerophon adown and thought
How fate his wandering footsteps erst had brought
To such another place, and of the end,
Whate'er it was, that fate to him did send.
Yet since the time was fair, and day by day
Ever some rag of fear he cast away,
And ever less doubt of himself he had,
In that bright concourse was he blithe and glad,
And the King blessed the fair and merry tide
That set so blithe a fellow by his side.

BUT the next day, in honour of the guest,
The King bade deck all chambers with his best,
And bid all folk to joyous festival,
And let the heralds all the fair youth call
To play with him in lists at many a game;
Since here last eve the great Corinthian came
That ye have heard of: and though ye indeed
Of more than manly strength may well have need
To match him, do your best, lest word he hear
That now too soft the Lycian folk live here,
Forgetting whence their fathers came of yore
And whom their granddames to their grandsires bore.
SO came the young men thronging, and withal
Before the altars did the oxen fall
To many a god; the well-washed fleeces fair
In their own bearers' blood were dyed, and there
The Persian merchants stood and snuffed the scent
Of frankincense, for which of old they went
Through plain and desert waterless, and faced
The lion-haunted woods that edge the waste.
Then in the lists were couched the pointless spears,
The oiled sleek wrestler struggled with his peers,
The panting runner scarce could see the crown
Held by white hands before his visage brown;
The horses, with no hope of gold or gain,
With fluttering hearts remembered not the rein
Nor thought of earth. And still all things fared so,
That all who with the hero had to do
Deemed him too strong for mankind; or if one
Gained seeming victory on Bellerophon,
He knew it for a courteous mockery
Granted to him. So did the day go by,
And others like it, and the talk still was
How even now such things could come to pass
That such a man upon the earth was left.
BUT when the ninth sun from the earth had reft
Silence, and rest from care, then the King sent
To see Bellerophon, who straightway went,
And found Jobates with a troubled face,
Facing a chamber of the royal place
From end to end, who turned as he drew near,
And said in a low voice: What dost thou here?
This is a land with many dangers rife;
Hast thou no heed to save the joyous life?
The wide sea is before thee, get thee gone;
All lands are good for thee but this alone!
AND as the hero strove to catch his eye
And 'gan to speak, he passed him hurriedly,
And gat him from the chamber: with a smile
Bellerophon turned too within a while,
When he could gather: breath from such a speech,
And said: Far then King Prætus' arm can reach:
So was it as I doubted; yet withal
Not everything to every king will fall
As he desires it, and the Gods are good;
Nor shall the Lycian herbage drink my blood:
The Gods are good, though far they drive me forth;
But the four quarters, south, west, east, and north,
All are alike to me, who therein have
None left me now to weep above my grave
Whereas I fall: and fair things shall I see,
Nor may great deeds be lacking unto me:
Would I were gone then! But with that last word
Light footsteps drawing swiftly nigh he heard,
And made a shift therewith his eyes to raise,
Then staggering back, bewildered with amaze,
Caught at the wall and wondered if he dreamed,
For there before his very eyes he seemed
To see the Lycian Sthenoboea draw nigh;
But as he strove with his perplexity
A soft voice reached his ears, and then he knew
That in one mould the Gods had fashioned two,
But given them hearts unlike; yea, and her eyes
Looked on his troubled face in no such wise
As had the other’s, wistful these and shy,
And seemed to pray, Use me not cruelly,
I have not harmed thee. Thus her soft speech ran:
Far have I sought thee, O Corinthian man,
And now that I have found thee my words fail,
Though erst my heart had taught me well my tale.
SHE paused, her half-closed lips were e’en as sweet
As the sweet sounds that thence the air did meet,
And such a sense swept o’er Bellerophon
As whiles in spring had come, and lightly gone
Ere he could name it; like a wish it was,
A wish for something that full swift did pass,
To be forgotten. Some three paces were
Betwixt them when she first had spoken there;
But now, as though it were unwittingly,
He slowly moved a little more anigh;
But she flushed red now ere she spake once more,
And faltered and looked down upon the floor.
O PRINCE BELLEROPHON, at last she said,
I dreamed last night that I beheld thee dead;
I knew thee thus, for twice had I seen thee,
Unseen myself, in this festivity;
And since I know how loved a man thou art,
Here have I come, to bid thee to depart,
Since that thou mayst do yet. Nigher he came,
And said: O fair one, I am but a name
To thee, as men are to the Gods above;
And what thing, then, thy heart to this did move?
SO spake he, knowing scarce what words he said;
Strange his own voice seemed to him; and the maid
Spake not at first, but grew pale, and there passed
A quivering o’er her lips; but at the last,
With eyes fixed full upon him, thus she spake:
Why should I lie? this did I for thy sake,
Because thou art the worthiest of all men,
Bellerophon who would not love is dead.
This is the dream: ah, hast thou heard me, then?
Abide no more, I say, among these men:
Think'st thou the world without thy life can thrive,
More than my heart without thy heart can live?
ALMOST before her lips the words could say,
She turned her eager glittering eyes away,
And hurried past, and as her feet did bear
Her loveliness away, he seemed to hear
A sob come from her; but for him, he felt
As in some fair heaven all his own he dwelt,
As though he ne'er of any woe had known,
So happy and triumphant had he grown.
But when he thus a little while had stood
With this new pleasure stirring all his blood,
He 'gan to think how that she was not there,
And 'thwart the glory of delight came care,
As uttermost desire so wrought in him,
That now in strange new tears his eyes did swim,
He scarce knew if for pleasure or for pain,
Of other things he strove to think in vain;
Nought seemed they: the strange threatening of the King,
Nay the maid's dream, it seemed a little thing
That he should read their meaning more than this:
Here in the land of Lycia dwells thy bliss;
So much she loved thee that she wished thee gone,
That thou mightst live, though she were left alone;
Or else she had not left thee; failing not
To see how all the heart in thee waxed hot
To cast thine arms about her and to press
Her heart to thine and heal its loneliness.
PITY grew in him as he thought thereof,
And with its sweet content fed burning love,
Till all his life was swallowed by its flame,
And dead and passed away were fear and shame,
Nor might he think that he could ever die.
BUT now at last he with a passionate sigh
Turned from the place where he had seen her feet,
And murmured as he went: O sweet, O sweet,
O sweet the fair morn that thou breathedst in,
Bore bandages the red blood struggled through;
E’en such they seemed, the hero thought, as folk
That erst before his Argive spears had broke,
And at his feet their vain arms down had cast:
So, wonder thereat, through these folk he passed
Into the hall, where on the ivory throne
Jobates sat, with flushed face, gazing down
Upon the shrinking captains; therewithal
E’en as he entered did the King’s eyes fall
Upon him, and the King somewhat did start
At first, but then, as minding not the part
That he had played that morn, a gracious smile
Came o’er his face; then spake he in a while:
Look upon these, O wise Bellerophon,
And ask of them what glory they have won;
Or ask them not, but listen unto me:
Over the mountain-passes that men see
Herefrom, a town there is, and therein dwell
Folk baser and more vile than men can tell;
A godless folk, without a law or priest;
A thankless folk, who at high-tide and feast
Remember not the Gods: no image there
Makes glad men’s eyes, no painted story fair
Tells of past days; alone, unhelped they live,
And nought but curses unto any give:
A rude folk, nothing worth, without a head
To lead them forth, and this morn had I said
A feeble folk and bondsmen of mine own.
But now behold from this same bore? town
Are these men empty-handed now come back,
And midst these Solymi? is little lack
This morn of well-wrought swords and silk attire
And gold that seven times o’er has felt the fire.
Lo now, thou spak’st of wandering forth again;
Rather be thou my man, and ‘gainst these men
Lead thou mine army; nay, nor think to win

But little praise if thou dost well herein,
For these by yesterday are grown so great
That if thou winnest them, midst this red heat
Of victory, a great deed shalt thou do,
And great will thy reward be: wilt thou go?
Methought thou hast a mind to serve me here.
So, as Bellerophon drew more anear,
He thought within his heart: Ah, then, I know
From all these things why he would have me go;
Yet since indeed I may not quite depart
From Lycia now, because my new-smitten heart
Is bound with bonds of love unto the land,
Safer am I in armour, sword in hand,
Than midst these silken hangings and fair things,
That well I not hide many poison-stings;
The Gods are great, nor midst of men am I
Of such as, once being threatened, quickly die.
THEN he spake out: O King, wilt thou then pray
To all the Gods to give me a good day?
For when I was a youth and dwelt at home
Men deemed I knew somewhat of things to come,
And now methinks more dangers I foresee
Than any that have yet been forged for me.
THE King frowned at that word, and flushed blood-red,
As if against his will; but quickly said,
in a mild voice: Be of good cheer, O son;
For if the Gods help not Bellerophon
They will not have to say, that in this land
I prayed their good-will for thee with close hand.
No god there is that hath an altar here
That shall not smoke with something he holds dear
While thou art absent from us; but these men,
Whom as they are, are fain to try again,
As swiftly as may be, what from the Fates
In bloody fields the Lycian name awaits;
Mine armoury is not empty; yet there are
Unwounded men to furnish forth the war;
Yea, and mine household-folk shall go with thee,
And none but women in mine house shall be,
Until the Lycian shield once more is clean.

3bore: rough, rustic, unlearned.
4Solymi: inhabitants of Milyas, near Lycia, whom the Lycians considered lawless and primitive.
Through thee, as though no stain had ever been.
Canst thou be ready by the second day
Unto the Solymi to take thy way?
SO be it, said the wise Corinthian;
And here, O King, I make myself thy man;
May the Gods make us faithful; but if worse
Must happen, on his head fall all the curse
Who does the wrong! Now for thy part see thou
That we who go have everything enow;
Nor think to hear too soon of victory;
For though a spliced staff e'en as strong may be
As one ne'er broken, lean thou not thereon
Till o'er the narrow way thy feet have won
And thou may'st try it on the level grass.
Now give me leave, for I am fain to pass
Thy men in order by me, and to find
How best thy wounded honour I may bind.
THEN first the hero's hand the King's hand took;
But ill belike Jophates that did brook,
And well-nigh drew it back; yet still it lay
And moved not, and the King made haste to say:
May the Gods bless us both, as I bless thee,
Who at this tide givest good help to me!
Depart, brave man; and, doing but thy best,
Howe'er fate goes, by me shalt thou be blest.
THEN went Bellerophon, and laboured sore
To give the Lycian folk good heart once more,
Till day passed into night, and in fair dream
And hopeful waking, happy love did gleam,
E'en like the young sun, on the hero's head.
But when the next bright day was well-nigh dead,
Within the brazen porch Bellerophon
Stood thinking o'er all things that had been done.
Alone he was, and yearning for his love,
And longing for some deed the truth to prove
Of what seemed dreamlike now, midst all the stir
Of men and clash of arms; and wearier
He felt than need was, as the evening breeze
Raised up his hair. But while sweet images
His heart made now of what he once had seen,
Is it drawn forth? and say, Yea, verily,
And the wound healed. Then shall he bring thee straight
Unto his keel, which with loose sails doth wait
Thy coming, and shall give thee gold good store,
Nor bide the morn to leave the Lycian shore.
Farewell; I would have seen thee, but I feared.
I feared two things: first, that we might be heard
By green trees and by walls, and thus should I
Have brought the death on thee I bid thee fly.
The first. But for the second, since I speak
Now for the last time, Love has made me weak:
I feared my heart made base by sudden bliss;
I feared (wilt thou be wroth who readest this?)
Mine eyes I saw in thine that other tide;
I thought perchance that here thou mightst abide,
Constrained by Love. Now if I have said ill,
Shall not my soul of sorrow have its fill?
I sin, but bitter death shall pay therefor.
HE read the piteous letter o'er and o'er,
Till fell the tears thereon like sudden rain,
For he was young, and might not love again
With so much pleasure, such sweet bitterness,
Such hope amid that new-born sharp distress
Of longing; half-content to love and yearn,
Until perchance the fickle wheel might turn.
THE well-kissed sword within his belt he set,
But ye may well deem was more minded yet
To bide his fortune in the Lycian land,
What fear soe'er before his path might stand;
And great his soul grew, thinking of the tide
When every hindrance should be thrust aside,
And love should greet him; calm, as though the death,
He knew so nigh him, on some distant heath
Were sitting, flame-bound, waiting for the word
Himself should give. With hand upon his sword,
Unto the hall he took his way: therein
Was growing great and greater joyful din,
For there they drank unto the coming day;
And as through all that crowd he made his way,
The shouts rose higher round him, and his name

Beat hard about the stony ears of Fame.
SO then beside the Lycian King he sat
A little while, and spoke of this and that,
E'en as a man grown mighty; and at last
Some few words o'er that feast ing folk he cast,
Proud, mingling sharp rebuke with confidence,
And bade them feast no more, but going thence
Make ready straight to live or die like men.
And therewithall did he depart again
Amidst them, and for half the night he went
Hither and thither, on such things intent
As fit the snatcher-forth of victory;
And then, much wondering how such things could be,
That aught but love could move a man at all,
Into a dreamless slumber did he fall,
Wherefrom the trumpet roused him in the morn,
Almost before the summer sun was born;
And midst the new-born longings of his heart,
From that fair place now must he needs depart
Unguarded and unholpen to his fate.

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EVEN days of fear wore by; Philonoe
Must vex her heart with all that yet might be,
And oft would curse herself that she it was
Through whom such death as his should come to pass,
And weep to think of all her life made lone.

But on the eighth day, at the stroke of noon,
A little band of stained and battered men
Passed through the gate into the town again,
And left glad hearts as well as anxious ones
Behind them, as they clattered o'er the stones
Unto the palace: there the King they found
Set on his throne, with ancient lords around,
And cried to him: O King, rejoice! at last
Raised is thy banner, that ill men had cast
Unto the ground; as safely mayst thou lie
Within the city of the Solymi
As in this house thou buildedst for thy bliss,
For all things there are thine now, e'en as this.

THEN the King rose, and filled a cup with wine,
And said: All praise be unto things divine!
Yet ere I pour, how goes it with our folk?
Did many die before they laid the yoke
On these proud necks? when will they come again?
O King, they said, though they fell not in vain,
Yet many fell; but now upon the way
Our fellows are: I think on the third day
They will be here, and needs must they be slow
Because they have with them a goodly show;
Wains full of spoil, arms, and most fair attire,
Wrought gold that seven times o'er has felt the fire;
And men and women of thy stubborn foes
E'en as thou wilt their lives to keep or lose.

WHAT sayst thou next about Bellerophon,
The King said, that this day for me hath won?
Is he alive yet? Then the man waxed pale,
And said: He liveth, and of small avail
Man's weapons are against him. On the wall
He stood alone, for backward did we fall
Before the fury of the Solymi,
And set to some strange unknown goal her face,
And she must stifle wails with bitterest pain:
If all this was, ought she not now to gain
A little rest? now, when she heard the voice
Of triumph and the people's maddening noise
Round her returning love. Still did she bear
Her grinding dread, if with a wearier,
Yet with a calmer face, than now she bore
 Desire so quickened by that fear passed o'er.
She in her garden wandered through the day,
And heavy seemed the hours to pass away.
Her colour came and went, she trembled when
She heard some louder shout of joyous men;
She could not hear the things her maidens spake,
Nor sought could she seem gracious for their sake;
The sweetest snatch of some familiar song
She might not hearken. She abode not long
Within the shadow; weary of the sun
She grew full soon; the glassy brook did run
In vain across her feet; the ice-cold well
Quenched not her thirst; the half-blown roses' smell
Was not yet sweet enough: the sun sank low,
And then she murmured that the day must go
That should have been so happy: weakly
She laid her down that night, but nought slept she;
Yet in the morn the new sun seemed to bring
A joy to her, and some unnamed dear thing
Better than rest or peace; for in her heart
She knew that he in all her thoughts had part;
Yes, and she thought how dreamlike he would ride
Amidst his glory, and how ill abide
The clamour of the feast; yea, and would not
That night to him belike be dull and hot,
And that dawn hopeful? 'Neath the wall there was
A place where dewy was the daisied grass
Ten nigh the noon; a high tower great and round
Cast a long shadow o'er that spot of ground,
And blind it was of window or of door:
For, wrought by long-dead men of ancient lore,
No part it was of that stone panoply
That girt the town; so lilies grew thereby,
And woodbine, and the odorous virgin's-bower,
Hung in great heaps about that undyked old tower,
And lone and silent was the pleasance there.
Thither Love led Phioinoe the fair,
And well she knew of him, and still her heart
At every little sound and sight would start,
And still her palms were tingling for the touch
Of other hands, and ever over-much.
Her feet seemed light. But when the bushes gleamed
With something more than the low sun that streamed
Athywart their blossoms, and a clear voice rung
Above the ouselfs; then, with terror stung,
She leaned her slim and perfect daintiness
'Gainst the grey tower, and even like distress.
Her great joy seemed. Green clad he was that morn,
And to his side there hung a glittering horn;
A mighty unbent bow was in his hand,
And o'er his shoulders did the feathers stand
Of his long arrows; in his gleaming eyes
Such joy there was, as he beheld the prize,
That in that shadow now he seemed to be
A piece of sunlight fallen down suddenly.
So face to yearning face they stood awhile,
And every word at first seemed poor and vile,
None better than another; nor durst they
Lips upon lips or palm to fingers lay,
More than if many people stood around,
With such strange fear and pain doth love abound.
At last she spake: Thou comest, then, to say
How thou wilt now be wise and go away,
E'en as I bade; the prey has 'scape the net;
Be wise, the Fowler other wiles hath yet!
YEA, said he, then thy word it was indeed
That needs must think about me in my need:
Strange, then, that now thou biddest me be gone!

5woodbine: a climbing plant, akin to ivy and convolvulus.
6virgin's-bower: British climbing shrub, Clematis Vitalba.
7undyked tower: a tower not surrounded by a dyke or watercourse.
8ouself: blackbird.
Are tears sweet, and the longing sobs that wear
The hours away, where life and hope are gone?
How can I any longer be alone?
Can I forget thee now the while I live?
O my beloved, must I strive and strive,
And move thee not? How sweet thou art to me!
How dull the coming day that knows not thee!
FEAR not, he said; not yet my days are done!
When on the deadly wall I stood alone,
And back the traitors fell from me, I felt
As though within me such a life there dwelt
As scarce could end. Lo now, if I depart
I lack the safeguard of thy faithful heart,
And meet new dangers that thou knowest not of.
Yea, listen, nor rebuke me. This our love;
Hast thou not heard how love may grow a-cold
Before the lips that called thereon wax old?
Ah, listen! seas betwixt us, and great pain,
And death of days that shall not be again;
And yearning life within us, and desire
That changes hearts as fire will quench the fire.
These are the engines of the Gods, lest we,
Through constant love, Gods too should come to be.
A little pain, a little fond regret,
A little shame, and we are living yet,
While love that should outlive us lieth dead.
Ah, my beloved, lift that glorious head
And look upon me! put away the thought
Of time and death, and let all things be nought
But this love of to-day! and think of me
As if for ever I should seem to thee
As I am now. I will not go away,
Nor saw my love, to reap some coming day
I know not what: be merry, we shall live
To see our love high o'er all danger thrive.
FOR now she wept, but, starting midst her tears,
She stopped and listened like a bird that hears
A danger on the wind: the round tower's shade
A lesser patch upon the daisies made,
And all about the place 'gan folk to stir:

She turned and girt her loosened gown to her,
And with one sob, and a long faithful look,
The gathering tears from out her eyes she shook,
Nor bade farewell, but swiftly gat her gone.
BUT he beneath the tower so left alone
Stood down and kissed her footprints in the grass,
And then with swift steps through the place did pass,
Thinking high things; nor knew he till that hour
How sweet life was, or love its fruit and flower.
SO passed the days, nor often might it be
That such sweet hours as this the twain might see
And they must watch that folk might not surprise
Their hearts' love through the windows of their eyes
When midst of folk they met: but glorious days
Were for Bellerophon, and love and praise
From all folk, though the great end lingered yet
When he sweet life, or glorious death, should get.

Ow on a day was held of most and least
Unto Diana sacrifice and feast,
And on that tide the market empty was,
And through the haven might no dromund's pass;
And then the wont was they should bear about
The goddess wrought in gold, with song and shout
And winding of great horns, amidst a band
Of bare-kneed maidens, bended bow in hand
And quiver at the back; and these should take,
As if by force, and for the city's sake,
Three damsels chosen by lot for that same end,
And bind their hands, and with them straightly wend
Unto the temple of Diana: there
The priest should lead them to the altar fair,

Dromund: var. of dromund (Morris used both spellings). A dromund was a
large medieval vessel propelled by many oars, used in war and commerce. In
some ancient times it referred to a ship with rowers and a single sail.
Diana: Several of these details may have been invented by Morris, but some
deviation from ancient accounts (or legends) of human sacrifice to Diana/Artemis.
Ovid's Metamorphoses XII contains an account of the intended sacrifice of
Iphigenia to Diana at Aulis, and Euripides elaborated the legend further in
Iphigenia at Aulis and Iphigenia in Tauris.
And midst old songs should raise aloft the knife
As if to take from each her well-loved life;
Therewith the King, with a great company,
Through the great door would come and respite cry,
And offer ransom: a great golden horn,
A silver image of a flowering thum,
Three white harts with their antlers gilt with gold,
A silk gown for a huntress, every fold
Thick wrought with gold and gems; then to and fro
An ancient song was sung, to bid men know
That of such things the goddess had no need;
Yet in the end the maidens all were freed,
The harts slain in their place, the dainty things
Hung o'er the altar from fair silver rings,
And then, midst semblance of festivity
And joyful songs, the solemn day went by.
ALL this they told Bellerophon, and said,
Moreover, that the white-foot well-girt Maid
These gifts must have, because a merry rout
Of feasters, knowing neither fear nor doubt,
With love and riot did her grove defile
In the old days; and therefore nought more vile
Than three fair maids' lives would she have at first,
And with that burden was the city cursed
For many years; but in these latter days,
She to whom we to-morrow give great praise,
Will take these signs of our humility,
And let the folk in other wise go free.
SO on the morn joyful the city was,
Nor did men look for aught to come to pass
More than in other years; but lo, a change!
For there betid great portents dire and strange.
For first, when in the car of cedar-wood,
Decked with green boughs, the golden goddess stood,
And the white oxen strained at yoke and trace,
In no wise might they move her from the place,
Though they had drawn well twenty times that weight.
So when the priests had come in all their state
To pray her, and no lighter she would grow,
They said she did it for that folk might know
She fain would have a shrine built o'er the way,
And that all rites should there be wrought that day.
SO was it done, and now all things seemed well
A little space, and nought there was to tell
Until the King had brought the ransom due,
And the loosed bonds men from the maidens drew;
Then fell the third maid down before the King,
And cried from foaming mouth a shameful thing
Unmeet for maidens; then from the frightened folk
That filled the street a clamour there outbroke,
And some cried out to slay the woman there,
And some to burn her wanton body fair,
And some to cast her forth into the sea
And purge the town of that iniquity.
BUT when the King had bidden lead her forth,
And try if she indeed were one of worth,
Or if her maidenhood were nought and vain,
The tossing street grew somewhat stilled again,
And o'er the sinking tumult called a priest:
Abide, let see if she will take the beast
Even as her wont is; but if so it be
That of our old crime she hath memory
And threatens us with something strange and new,
Yet mid your fear do all in order due,
Nor make two faults of one, lest ye should bear
A double punishment from year to year.
THEN were the harts brought forth; the first one stood
Fearless as he were lonely in the wood,
While to his throat drew nigh the sharp-edged knife,
Nor did the second strive to keep his life;
But when the third and biggest drew anigh,
He tossed his gilded antlers angrily
And smote his foot against the marble floor,
While from his throat came forth a low hoarse roar;
And as the girl whose office was to smite
His drawn-back throat came forth confused and white,
And raised a waverling hand aloft, then he
His branching horns from the priests' hands shook free,
And as the affrighted girl fell back, turned round,
And gathered up his limbs for one last bound;
But even therewith a soldier from the band
That stood about the King raised up his hand,
And in the beast's heart thrust his well-steel'd spear,
And as he smote, like one who knew no fear,
He cried aloud: O foolish Artemis, 11
Men's ways thou knowest not, putting from thee this,
The gift once offered! think no more of us
That we will pray with eyes all piteous
Before thee, or give gifts from trembling hands;
But get thee gone straightway to other lands,
Where folk will yet abide thee; for we know
How long a way it is for thee to go
From heaven to earth, how far thine arms will reach,
And no more now thy good-will do beseech!
He stooped, and from the beast his weapon drew,
Then turned and passed his fear-struck fellows through,
Or ere the swords from out the scabbards came;
And so folk say, that no man knew his name
Or whence he was. But from the concourse broke
In pale and murmuring knots the frightened folk;
And if the priests had heart yet for a word
Of comfort, neither so had they been heard;
But they slunk off too, more perchance afraid
Because they were the nigher to the Maid.
Now had the morn begun with cloud and sun;
But, little heeded there of any one
Mid that beginning of fear's agony,
Slowly the clouds were swallowing up the sky;
So ere the sun had wholly sunk in them,
Great drops fell slowly from a black cloud's hem
Amid that troubled folk, who felt as though
They from that place of terror needs must go,
Yet, going, scarce could feel their unnerved feet;
Then gleamed a lightning-flash adown the street,
The clattering thunder, made ten times more loud
Because of dread, hushed all the murmuring crowd,
And brought a many trembling to their knees,
And some set off a-running towards the quays.

11 Artemis: Diana.
And clear the air was with the coming rain:
So then as he would turn his head again,
Out in the far horizon like a spark
Some flame broke out against the storm-clouds dark,
And seemed to grow beneath his eyes; he stood,
And, gazing, saw across the day's dark mood
Another and another, nigh the first;
Then, as the distant thunder's threatening cursed
The country-side, and trembling beast and man,
The spark-like three flames into one thread ran,
That shot aloft amidst, yet further spread
At either end; and to himself he said:
Ah, is it so? what tidings then draw near?
In warlike lands soon should I look to hear
Of armies marching on through war and wrack;
Good will it be in haste to get me back
Unto the foolish folk that trust in me.\textsuperscript{12}
THEN did he mount and ride off hastily
Adown the slopes; but not so fast withal
But that upon him did the full storm fall
In no long time; and so through pelting rain
And howling wind he reached the gate again;
And so unto the palace went, to hear
From pale lips tales of all that day of fear;
And when about those bale-fires seen afar
He spake, and bade make ready for some war,
Folk listened coldly; for they thought to see
Some strange, portentous sign of misery
Set in the heavens upon the morrow morn,
And the old tale of war seemed well outworn.
\textsuperscript{12}Unto the ... folk that trust in me: This sense of duty is absent from Morris' sources.

Wearied by fear, if some their tired limbs kept
Ready for flight; then clattering horse-hooves came
To the east gate, and one called out the name
Of him who had the guard; so said the man,
That forth he went into the moonlight wan,
And saw aught but the tall black-shadowed trees
Waving their dripping boughs in the light breeze,
So went back scared. But in a while again
The galloping horse did he hear plain,
But he and his sat fast and spake no word,
And scarce for fear might they hold spear or sword.
Nigher the sound came, till it reached the gate;
Then as the warders did abide their fate,
Thinking to see the gates burst open wide,
And death in some strange shape betwixt them ride,
The gates were smitten on with hasty blows,
And breathless cries of wild entreaty rose
Up through the night: Open, O open, ye
Who sit in peace, and let in misery!
Do ye not see the red sky at our backs?
And how the earth all quiet places lacks,
And shakes beneath the myriad hooves of steel?
Open, ah open, as ye hope for weal!
For ships lie at your quays with sails all bent
And oars made ready. Open, we are spent!
Do ye not hear them? Open, Lycinian men!
With staring eyes still sat the warders when
That cry they heard, and knew not what should be;
And the great gates of oak, clenched mightily
With iron endlongs and athwart, seemed fair
Unto their eyes; but as they cowered there
A clash of steel again their dull ears heard
That came from out the town, and more afeard
They grew, if it might be; then torches came
Into the place of guard, and mid their flame
A shining one in arms, with wrathful eyes
Neath his bright helm, who cried: Why in this guise
Sit ye, O Lycians? Get each to his home!
For know that yesterday three keels did come
Laden with spindles and all women's gear, 
And none need lack e'en such a garment here 
As well befits him; lutes the Gods have sent, 
And combs and golden pins, to that intent 
That ye may all be merry: what say I? 
Ye may be turned to women venily, 
Because the Gods are wise, and thriftless deed 
Mislikes them, and forsooth is little need 
That thews and muscles go with suchlike hearts 
As ye have, while all wise and manly parts 
Are played by girls, weak-handed, soft, and white. 
Get to the tower-top, look ye through the night, 
And ye shall see the cleared sky made all red 
And murky 'neath the moon with signs of dread: 
Come forth and meet them! What! the Gods ye fear, 
And what they threaten? Life to you is dear? 
Ah, fools, that think not how to all on earth 
The very death is born along with birth; 
That some men are but dying twenty years, 
That some men on this sick-bed of all tears 
Must lie for forty years, for eighty some, 
Or ever they may reach their peaceful home! 
Ah, give to birth the name of death, and wait 
With brave hearts rather for the stroke of fate, 
And hope, since ye gained death when ye were born, 
That ye from death by dying may be torn; 
Unless ye deem that if this day ye live, 
The next a deathless life to you will give. 
Come, then! these few behind me may ye see 
Who think it worse to live on wretchedly 
Than cast the die amidst of noble strife 
For honoured death or fearless glorious life. 
Yea, yea! and is the foe upon us then? 
FOR even as he spake they heard again 
The smiting on the door, and as the sword 
Leapt from the exile's sheath with his last word,

13 *all women's gear*: The Greeks believed that the Amazons, mounted women-warriors, inhabited the margins of the known world. Morris seems to have made them crueler and harsher in this passage than most ancient sources would have suggested (e.g. II. 1471-1512).
Keep thou thy scorn till thou art face to face
With these a minute ere the fearful chase.
LOUD laughed Bellerophon, and said: See ye,
O tremblers, what foreknowledge was in me,
When I said e'en now ye should change your parts
With women! Throw the gates wide, fearful hearts,
And let us out, that with a word or two
All that is needed herein we may do.
THE old man said: Laugh, then, while yet your eyes
Are still unblasted with the miseries
These days have brought on us! Lo, if I tell
Half of the dreadful things that there befell,
Ye will not listen; if I tell the shape
Of these fell monsters, for whom hell doth gape,
Still will ye say that but my fear it is
That speakest in me; yea, but hearken this,
For certain such foes are on you now
As, bound together by a dreadful vow,
Will slay yourselves, and wives, and little ones,
And build them temples with the sun-bleached bones
Unto the nameless One who gives them force.
THEN cried Bellerophon, in wrath: To horse!
To horse, O Lycians! Ere the moon is down
The dawn shall come to light us. In the town
Bide thou, O captain, and guard gate and wall,
And leave us to what hap from Fate may fall!
We are snow, and for these cowards here,
Let them have yet another death to fear
Unless they rule their tongues. Tell thou the King
That, when I come again, full many a thing
These lips will have to tell him; and meanwhile,
Since often will the Gods make strong the vile,
And bring adown the great, let him have care
That this his city is left nowise bare
Of men, and food, and arms. More might I say,
But now methinks the night's face looks toward day
The moon sinks fast; so get we speedily

Bellerophon in Lycia

Unto that redness in the eastern sky,
That at the dawn with smoke shall dim the sun.
A SHOUT rose when his last clear word was done,
And at his back went rolling down the way
Mingled with clash of arms; for, sooth to say,
Hard had he laboured ere the dark night fell,
And thus had gathered men who loved him well,
Stout hearts to whom more fair it seemed to be
The face of death in stricken field to see
Than in that place to bide, till Artemis
Had utterly consumed all hope of bliss
With some unknown, unheard-of shape of fear.
SO now his well-shod steed they brought him there;
Once more from out its sheath he drew his sword,
The gates swung backward at his shouted word,
And forth with eager eyes into the waves
Of darkness did he ride; the spears and glaives\(^{15}\)
Moved like a tossing winter grove behind
As on he led them, fame or death to find;
And grey night made the world seem over-wide,
And over-empty, in the darkling tide
Btwixt the moonset and the dawn of day,
THEN rose the sun; the fear that last night lay
Upon that people changed to certain fear
Well understood, of death that drew anear;
And now no more the timorous kept their eyes
Turned unto earth, lest in the sky should rise
The dreadful tokens of a changing world;
No more they thought to see strange things down-hurled
By Gods as unlike their vain images
As unto men are hell's flame-branched trees.
Last night for any war or pestilence
Glad had they been to change that crushing sense
Of helplessness and lies; but now this morn,
Tormented by the rumour newly born,
The vague fear seemed the lightest; the Gods' hands
Less cruel than the deeds of those fell bands:
Uprooted vines, fields trampled into mire,

\(^{14}\) the nameless One: The Amazons worshipped Artemis and Ares, but "the nameless One" here is probably Artemis (Diana).

\(^{15}\) glaives: spears or broadswords, from the Latin gladius ("sword").
The ring of spears around the stead afire,
Steel or the flame for choice; the torture-hour
When time is gone, and the flesh hath no power
But to give agony on agony
Unto the soul that will not let it die,
So strong it is, the lone despair; the shame
Of a lost country and dishonoured name;
These last but little things to bear indeed,
When e’en the greatest helps not in our need,
And o’er the earth is risen furious hell.
NOW, when this terror on the city fell,
At first went thronging to the clamorous quays
Rich men, with whatso things their palaces
Could give that strong-backed slaves of theirs might bear.
And to and fro the great lords wandered there,
Making hard bargains ’neath the shipmen’s grin,
Who had good will a life of ease to win
With one last voyage; here and there indeed,
Among the heaps of silver and rich weed
Piled on the deck, the hard-hand mariners
Thrust rudely ’gainst the wondering infant heirs,
And delicate white slaves, and proud-eyed wives,
And grumbled as they wrought to save their lives.
And here and there a ship was moving out
With white sails spreading amid oath and shout,
While her sweeps" smote the water heavily,
And on the prow stood, yearning for the sea
And other lands beyond, some trembling lord.
But presently thereof the King had word;
And when he knew that thus the matter went,
A trusty captain to the quays he sent,
And stout men armed, who lined the water-side.
So there perforce must every man abide,
For shut and guarded now was every gate.
BUT if, amid the fear of coming fate,
You ask how fared the sweet Philonoe,
With mind a shrinking tortured thing to see,
How shall you wonder! Tales of dread she heard

16sweep: large oars.
Made brave, some men must catch up shield and spear,
And leaderless go forth unto the flame
All eyes were turned to; but when daylight came,
With its grey light came naked death again,
And honourless did all things seem and vain
That man might do; the gates were left ajar,
And through the streets helpless in weed of war
The warders went: nought worth the King was made,
When by each man the truth of all was weighed,
And all seemed wanting: help there was in none.
YET when 'mid these things nigh the day was done,
And the foe came not, once more hope was born
Within men's hearts too wearied and outworn
To gather fresh fear; then the walls seemed good,
The great gates more than iron and oaken wood,
And with returning hope there came back shame,
And they, bethinking them of their old name,
'Gan deem that spear to spear was no ill play,
What wrath of goddesses soever lay
Upon the city; and withal indeed,
There came fresh rumours to their honour's need,
And they bethought them of the godlike one
Who in their midst so great a deed had done,
And who erewhile rode forth so carelessly
Their very terror with his eyes to see.
SO at the sunset into ordered bands
Once more the men were gathered; women's hands
Bore stones up to the ramparts, that no more
That crowd of pale and anxious faces bore,
But helms and spear-heads; and the King came forth
Amidst his lords, and now of greater worth
Than common folk he seemed once more to be.
And in some order, if still timorously,
The Lycians waited through the night; the sky
Showed lesser tokens of the foe anigh,
So still hope grew. At dawn of day the King
Bade folk unto Diana's image bring
Things precious and burnt-offerings; and the smoke
Curled o'er the bowed heads of the praying folk
There in the streets, and though nought came to pass

To tell that well appeased the goddess was,
And though they durst not strive to move her thence,
Yet did there fall on men a growing sense
That now the worst was over: and at noon,
Just as the King amid the trumpets' tune
Went to his house, a messenger pierced through
The wondering crowd, and toward Jobates drew,
Nor did him reverence, nor spake aught before
He gave unto the King the scroll he bore;
Then from his saddle heavily down-leapt,
Stiffened, as one who not for long has slept,
While the King read the scroll; then those anigh
Amid the expectant silence heard him cry:
Praise to the Gods, who are not angry long!
Hearken, all ye, how they have quenched our wrong.
Good health and good-hap to the Lycian King
And all his folk, and every wished-for thing
Wiseth hereby Bellerophon, and saith:
From out the valley of the shade of death17
Late am I come again to make you glad,
Because no evil journey have we had.
And now the land is cleansed of such a pest
As has not been before; be glad and rest,
And look to see us back in seven days' space,
For yet awhile must we abide to chase
The remnant of the women that ye feared.
SILENCE a moment followed that last word,
Then such a joyous shout, as good it is
That those can know not who still dwell in bliss;
Then turning here and there, with varied noise
The people through all places did rejoice,
Till pleasure failed for weariness; but still
Did old and young, and men and women, fill
The temples with their praises; till, when earth
Had fallen into twilight mid their mirth,
With prayers and hymns they brought the great-eyed, white,
Slow-going oxen through the gathering night.

And yoked them to Diana's car again;
Nor this time were they yoked thereto in vain:
Down went the horned heads, beam and axe-tree
Creaked as they drew, and folk cried out to see
The wheels go round; heart opened unto heart
With unhoped joy, and hate was set apart;
Envy and malice waited for some day
More common, as the goddess took her way
Amid the torch-lit, flower-strewn, joyous street,
Unto the house made ready for her feet.
BUT mid the noise of great festivity
That filled the night, slept on Philonoe,
Amid that sea of love past hope and fear,
And woke at sunrise no more sound to hear
Than singing of the birds in thick-leaved trees
Ere yet the sun might silence them; like these
Did she rejoice, nor strange to her it was
That all these things her love should bring to pass.
Rising, she said: To-day thou workest this,
And unto many givest life and bliss;
To-morrow comes: therewith perchance for me
A time when thou my faithful heart mayst see.
THEN she alone her fair attire did on,
And mid the sleepers went her way alone
Into the garden, and from flower to flower
Passed, making sweeter even that sweet hour;
And as by soft folds of her fluttering gown
Her body's fairness was both hid and shown,
E'en so in simpleness her soul indeed
Lay, not drawn back, but veiled beneath the weed
Of earthly beauty that the Gods had lent
Till they through years should work out their intent.
O'ER the freed city passed the time away,
Until it drew unto the promised day
Of their return who all that peace had won.
And now the loved name of Bellerophon
Rang ever in the maiden's ears; and she,
As in the middle of a dream, did see
The city made all ready for that hour,
When in a fair-hung townward-looking bower,

Bellerophon in Lycia

Pale now, amidst her maids she should be set,
New pain of longing for her heart to get.
SOME dream there was of hurrying messengers
Bright with a glory that was nowise theirs,
And strains of music bearing back again
The heart to vague years long since lived in vain;
Then still a moving dream of robes of gold,
Armour unsullied by the bloody mold
That bought this peace; a dream of noble maid
And longings youth in snowy robes arrayed;
Of tinkling harps and twinkling jewelled hands,
And gold-shod feet to meet the war-worn bands,
That few and weary, flower-crowned, made the dream
Less real amid the dauntless people seem:
A wild dream of strange weapons heaped on wains,
And rude-wrought raiment vile with rents and stains,
And dream-like figures by the axe-trees:19
Women or beasts? and in the hands of these
Trumpets of wood, and conch-shells, and withal
Clamour of blast and horrid rallying call,
And such a storm of strange discordant cries,
As stilled the townsfolk mid their braveries,
For therewith came the prisoners of the flight.
A DREADFUL dream! with blood-stained hair and white,
Clad in most strange habiliment of war,
Sat an old woman on a brazen car;
White stared her eyes from a brown puckered face
Upon the longed-for dainties of that place,
But wrath and fear no more in them were left,
For death seemed creeping on her; an axe-heft
Her chained hands held yet; and a monstrous crown,
Of heavy gold, 'twixt her thin feet and brown
Was laid as she had cast it off in fight,
When she was fain amidst her hurried flight
To hide all signs of her fell10 royalty.
An unreal dream: about her seemed to be
Figures of women, clad in warlike guise,

19Axe-trees: rigid wagon-axles with bearings at each end for the wheels.
10Fell: harsh.
In scales of brass, beasts' skins, and cloths of dyes,
Uncouth and coarse, made vile with earth and blood.
A dream of horror! nought that men deem good
Was seen in them; were they or young or old:
Great-limbed were some and mighty to behold,
With long black hair and beast-like brows and low;
Bald-headed, old, and wizened did some go,
Yet all adorned with gold; this, in rich gown
Of some slain woman, went with eyes cast down;
That yelling walked, with armour scantily clad,
And at her belt a Lycian's head yet had
Hung by the flaxen hair; this, old and bent,
From bushy eyebrows grey strange glances sent,
Grinning as from their limbs the people shrank;
But most the cup of pain and terror drank,
That they had given to drink so oft ere now
If any sign thereof their eyes might show;
And whatso mercy they of men might have,
No hope for them their gross hearts now did save.
A DREADFUL dream! Philonoe's slim hands
Shut from her eyes the sight of those strange bands;
Yet dreamlike must her heart behold them still,
Amid new thoughts of God, and good and ill,
And her eyes filled with tears. But what was this
That smote her yearning heart with sudden bliss,
Yet left it yearning? her fair head she raised,
And with wide eyes down on the street she gazed,
Yet cried not out; though all cry had been drowned
Amid those joyous shouts, as, laurel-crowned,
And sword in hand, and in his battered gear
On his black horse he came, and raised to her
Eyes that her heart knew. Nay, she moved not aught,
Nor reached her arms abroad, as he was brought
Beneath her place, too soon to go away;
And open still her hands before her lay
As down the street passed on the joyous cries,
Nor were there any tears in her soft eyes;
Only her lips moved softly, as she cast
One look upon the people going past,
Struggling and slow behind the last bright spears,
Whose steady points had so thrust back their fears.
BUT amid silence 'neath the eyes of men,
Another time that day they met again;
And that was at the feast in the great hall,
For thither must the King's folk, one and all,
Women as men, give welcome unto him
Through whom they threw. Belike all things grew dim
Before the hero's eyes but her alone,
Belike a strange light in the maid's eyes shone,
Made bright with pain; but yet hand met not hand,
Though each to each so close the twain must stand,
And though the hall was hushed to hear her say
Words that she needed not of that fair day.
But when her clear and tender speech had end,
And mouths of men a mighty shout did send
Betwixt the pillars, still her lips did move,
As though they two were lone, with words of love
Unheard, but felt by him. So passed the day,
And other days and nights fell fast away;
But now when this great trouble had gone by,
And things again seemed no more now to lie
Within his mighty hands, she 'gan to fear
Her father's wiles again; the days grew drear,
The nights too long, nor might she see his face,
Nor might they speak in any lonely place;
And hope at whiles waxed dim, and whiles she saw
The fate her heart so dreaded on them draw,
While she must sit aside with folded hands,
While for her sake he shunned the peaceful lands:
And all the while there must at last be borne
That darkest hour that brings about the morn.

OW as the days passed, to his treasury
Would the King go, King Proetus' gift to see,
And stand with knitted brows to gaze on it,
While many thoughts about his heart would flit
And on a day he said: Time yet there is
To slay the man who saved our life and bliss.
Once did I cast him unto death, and he
Must win nought thence but utter victory;
And when the Gods helped me with ruin and fear
Another time, yet that brought nowise near
The end this binds me to; yet once again
Shall it be tried before I call it vain,
And strive no more, but bear the punishment
That on oath-breakers and weak fools is sent.
THEN gat he to the doom-hall of the town,
And midst his lords and wise men sat him down
And judged the people: if at whiles to him
The clamour of the jarring folk waxed dim
Amid the thoughts of his own life that rose
Within him, and about his heart did close,
Yet none the less a great King there he seemed;
As of a god's his heart the people deemed.
NOW in good peace and joy the summer wore,
Nor did folk mind how it was told of yore
That in the days to come great dangers three
Within the bounds of Lycia should there be;
For fear of ill was grown an empty name.
Into fair autumn slipped the summer's flame,
More fruitful than its wont, and barn and garth
Ran over with the good things of the earth.
Crowded the quays were, but no merchandise,
No bale of fair-wrought cloth or odoriferous spice,
Bore pestilence within it at that tide;
In peace and health the folk dwelt far and wide.
BUT when the way's dust easier now was seen
Upon the bordering grape-bunches, whose green
Was passing slow through red to heavy black,
And the ploughed land all standing crop did lack,
Though yet the share20 the fallow troubled not;
Now, when the nights were cool, and noons still hot,
And in the windless woods the acorn fell,
More tidings were there of that land to tell.
FOR on a day as in the doom-hall sat
Jobates, and gave word on this and that,
A clamour by the outer door he heard
Of new-come folk, mixed with the answering word
Of those his guards, who at the door did stand;

20share: ploughshare.
Against its bunches green might not prevail.
Up a fair hill it stretched; exceeding good
Its sunny south-turned slopes are; a thin wood
Of oak-trees crowns the hill indeed, wherein
Do harbour beasts most fain a feast to win. A
At hands of us and Bacchus; but a wall
Well built of stones guardeth the garth from all
On three sides, and at bottom of the hill
A full stream runs, that dealeth with a mill,
My brother's too, whose floury duxiness
Our hungry souls with many a hope did bless;
Within the mill-head there the perch feed fat,
And on the other side are meadows flat
And fruitful; thorn now, and the rooting swine
Beneath the hedge-row oak-trees grunt and whine,
And close within the long grass lies the quail,
While circling overhead the kite doth sail,
And long the partridge hath forgot the mowers.
A close of pot-herbs and of garland flowers
Go up the hill-side from the green-banked stream,
And a house built of clay and oaken beam
Stands at its upper end, whose hillward side
Is midst the vines, that half its beams do hide.
Nay, King, I wander not, I mind me well
The tale from end to end I have to tell;
Have patience! Fair that house was yesterday,
When lusty youth and slim light-handed may
Were gathered from the hamlets thereabout;
From the stream-side came laughing scream and shout,
As up the bank the nets our maidens drew,
And o'er their bare feet washed with morning dew
Floundered the cold fish; for grape-gathering tide
It was that morn, and folk from far and wide
Came to our help, and we must feast them there,
And give them all we had of good and fair.
KING, do I babble? thou, for all thy crown

And robes of gold, hadst gladly sat thee down
At the long table 'neath the apple-trees:
And now, go find the bones of one of these,
And be called wise henceforth! The last guest came,
The last shout died away that hailed his name,
The ring of men about the homestead door
Began to move; the damsels hung no more
Over the fish-tubs, but their arms shook dry
And shed their feet, and came up daintily
To mingle with the girls new-come thereto,
And take their baskets and the edge-tools due;
The goodwife from the white well-scaled press
Brushed off the last wasp; while her mate did bless
The Gods, and Bacchus chiefly, as he poured
Upon the threshold ancient wine long stored
Under the earth; and then broke forth the song
As to the vineyard gate we moved along.
HEARKEN, O King! call me not mad, or say
Some evil god-sent dream upon me lay;
Else could I tell thee thus how all things fell?
Nay, speak not, or the end I may not tell.
Yes, am I safe here? will he hear of it
And come to fetch me, even if I sit
Deep underground, deep underneath the sea,
In places thou hast built for misery
Of those that hate thee; yet for safeguard now
Of me perchance? O King, abide not thou
Until my tale is done, but bid them go
Strengthen thy strong gates; deem thy high walls low
While yet the sun they hide not! At that word
He turned and listened as a man who heard
A doubtful noise afar, but still the King
Sat quiet midst his fear of some great thing,
And spake not, lest he yet should lose the tale.
THEN said the man: How much may now avail
My power and walls I know not, for I thought
Upon the wind a certain noise was brought;
But now I hear it not, and I will speak.
What said I? from all mouths there did outbreak
A plaintive song made in the olden time,

21 beasts most fain a feast to win: bears and other creatures who might be eager to eat the vineyard's grapes.
22 kite: any of various hawks (family Accipitridae) with long narrow wings and a forked tail.
Long sung by men of the wine-bearing clime;
Not long it was, and ere the end was o'er
In midst the laden vine-rows did we pour,
And fell to work as glad as if we played;
And merrier grew the laugh of man and maid
As the thin baskets filled upon that morn;
And how should fear or thought of death be born
In such a concourse! Now mid all this, I
Unto the upper end had drawn anigh,
And somewhat lonely was I, when I heard
A noise that seemed the cry of such a bird
As is a corncrake;\(^{23}\) well, I listened not,
But worked away whereas was set my lot,
Midst many thoughts; yet louder 'gan to grow
That noise, and not so like a bird seemed now
As a great spring of steel loosed suddenly.
I put my basket down, and turned to see
The other folk, nor did they heed the noise,
And still amid their labour did rejoice;
But louder still it seemed, as there I stood
Trembling a while, then turned, and saw the wood
Like and unlike what I had known it erst;
And as I gazed the whole sky grew accurst
As with a greenish vapour, and I turned
Wild eyes adown the hill to see what burned;
There did my fellows 'twixt the vine-rows pass
Still singing. Smitten then I thought I was
By sudden sickness or strange coming death;
But even therewith in drawing of a breath
A dreadful shriek rose from them, and mine eyes
Saw such a shape above the wall arise
As drave all manhood from me, and I fell
Grovelling adown; nor have I words to tell
What thing it was I saw; only I know
That from my feet the firm earth seemed to go,
And like a dream showed that fair country-side,
And, grown a mockery, needs must still abide,
An unchanged picture 'gainst the life of fear

\(^{23}\)corncrake: a bird with a harsh grating cry, also called the landrail.
Nigher the King, and said: This thing is true,
Though thou believe it not, that I was glad
Within the hour that yet my life I had,
Though this I saw, the garth made waste and bare,
Burnt as with fire, and for the homestead fair
The last flames dying o'er an ash-heap grey:
Gone was the mill, the freed stream took its way
In unchecked shallows o'er a sandy bed.
I KNEW not if my kin were slain or fled,
Yet was I glad awhile that nought was there
But me alone, till sense and dread 'gan stir
Within my heart; then slowly I began
To move about, and saw no child of man,
Unless maybe those ash-heaps here and there
I durst not go anigh my fellows were.
Could I but flee away now! down I get
Unto the stream, yet on the brink I sat
A long while yet, bewildered; till at last
I gathered heart, and through the stream ran fast,
And on and on, and cried: Are all men gone?
Is there none left on earth but I alone,
And have I nought to tell my tale unto?
SO did I run, until at last I knew
That among men I was who, full of fear,
Were striving somewhat of the words to hear
My heart spake but my lips would utter not;
And food and drink from them perchance I got,
Perchance at last I told the story there;
I know not, but I know I felt the air
And seemed to move: they must have brought me then
To thee, O King, but these are not the men,
These round about. There is no more to say;
Meseems I cannot sleep or go away,
Yet am I weary. Slowly came from him
The last words, and his eyes, all glazed and dim,
Began to close; he tottered, and at last
Sank on the ground, and into deep sleep passed,
Nor might men rouse him; so they bore him thence,
Till death should reach him or returning sense.
SO next of those who brought him thereunto

Was question made what of those things they knew;
Who answered e'en as for their fear they might;
For some had seen a fire the late-past night,
And some the morn before a yellow smoke;
And one had heard the cries of burning folk;
And one had seen a man stark naked fly
Adown the stream-side, and as he went by
Saw that he bled, and thought that on his flesh
Were dreadful marks, that were as done afresh
By branding irons. One, too, said he saw
A dreadful serpent by the moonlight draw
His dry folds o'er the warmer-parched way
Unto a pool that 'neath the hill-side lay.
And men there were who said that they had heard
The sound of lions roaring, and, afeard,
Had watched all-armed, with barred doors, through the night.
Then as men's faces paled with sore affright,
Unto the doom-hall came more folk, and more,
And tales of such-like things they still told o'er,
Of fresh deaths and of burnings, and still nought
They had to tell of what this fear had wrought.
NOW ye shall know that Prince Bellerophon
In a swift ship had sailed a while agone
'Gainst a Tyrrenian water-thief, 4 who then
Wrought great scathe on the peaceful merchantmen
That sought those waters; so the King sent forth
Another captain that he held of worth,
And eighty men with him in company,
Well armed, the truth of all these things to see.
AT sunset from the town did they depart,
And none among them seemed to lack good heart,
And wise they were in war; but ere the sun
Through all the hours of the next day had run,
One ancient brave man only of the band
Came back again, no weapon in his hand,
No shield upon his neck, but carrying now

4Tyrrenian water-thief: A water-thief was a device for drawing and siphoning water. The Tyrrenians, Etruscan predecessors of the Romans, held sway between the Tiber and Arno rivers.
His son's dead body on his saddle-bow,
A lad of eighteen winters, fair and strong;
But when men asked what thing had wrought that wrong,
Nought might he answer, but with bowed-down head
Still sat beside the armed body dead,
As one who had no memory; but when folk
Searched the youth's body for the deadly stroke,
No wound at all might they find anywhere;
So still the old man sat with hopeless stare,
And though he seemed right hale and sound of limb,
And ate and drank what things were brought to him,
Yet speechless did he live for three more days,
Then to the silent land he went his ways.

Now a great terror on the city fell,
Even as that whereof we had to tell
In the past summer; day by day there came
Folk fleeing to the gates, who thought no shame
To tell how dreams had scared them, or some sign
In earth, or sky, or milk, or bread, or wine,
Or in some beast late given unto a god;
And on the beaten ways once more there trod
The feet of homeless folk; the country-side
Grew waste and bare of men-folk far and wide;
And whatsoever men the King did send,
But little space upon their way did wend
Ere they turned back in terror; nigher drew
The belt of desolation, yet none knew
What thing of ill it was that wrought this woe,
More than the man who first the tale did show.

MEANWHILE men's eyes unto the sea were turned
Watching, until the Sea-hawk's image burned
Upon the prow Bellerophon that bore,
And his folk cast the hauser to the shore,
And long it seemed to them did he delay.
Yet since all things have end, upon a day
The Sea-hawk's great sweeps beat the water green,
And her long pennon down the wind was seen,
As nigh the noontide toward the quays she passed,
With sound of horns and singing; on the mast
Hung the sea-robbers' fair shields, lip to lip,
And high above the clamour of the ship,
Out from the topmast, a great pennoned spear
The terror of the seas aloft did bear,
The head of him who made the chapmen quake.
NEW hope did that triumphant music wak
Within men's hearts, as now with joyous shout
The bay-crowned shipmen shot the gangway out
Unto the shore, and once more as a god
The wise Bellerophon among them trod,
As to the Father's house he took his way,
The tenth of all the spoil therein to lay.
But when he came into the greatest square
Where was the temple, a great throng was there,
And on the high steps of the doom-hall's door
A clear-voiced, gold-clad herald stood, before
A row of spears; and now he cried aloud,
Over the raised heads of the listening crowd:
Hearken, O Lycians! King Jobates saith:
Upon us lies the shadow of a death
I may not deal with; old now am I grown,
And at the best am but one man alone;
But since such men there are, as yet may hope
With this vague unseen death of man to cope,
He whereby such a happy end is wrought
Shall nowise labour utterly for nought
As at my hands; lest to the gods we seem
To hold too fast to wealth, lest all men deem
We are base-born and vile: so know hereby,
That to the man who ends this woe will I
Give my fair daughter named Philonoë,
And this land's rule and wealth to share with me.
And if it be so that he may not take
The maiden, let him give her for my sake
To whom she will; or if that may not be,
A noble ransom shall he have of me
And be content. May the gods save us yet,
And in fair peace these fears may we forget!
HE ended, and the folk about the place,
Seeing the shipmen come, on these did gaze,
And in their eyes were mingled hope and doubt;  
But at the last the shadow of a shout  
They raised for Prince Bellerophon; and he  
Stood at the door one moment silently,  
And wondered; for he knew nought of the things  
That there had fallen while the robber-kings  
He chased o'er ridge and furrow of the sea;  
Because folk deemed ill-omened it would be  
To tell thereof ere all things due were paid  
Unto the Father, and the fair tenth laid  
Before his altar. Yet he could not fail  
To see that in some wise the folk must all;  
Such haggard eyes, such feverish faces were  
About him; yea, the clamour and the cheer  
That greeted him were eager with the pain  
Of men who needs must hope yet once again  
Before they fall into the jaws of death.  
SO as the herald spake, he held his breath,  
His heart beat fast, and in his eyes there burned  
The light of coming triumph, as he turned  
Unto a street that led from out the place,  
And up the steep way saw the changeless grace  
Of the King's palace, and the sun thereon,  
That calmly o'er its walls of marble shone,  
For all the feverish fears of men who die:  
One moment thus he stood, and smiled, then high  
Lifted his sword, and led the spear-wood through  
The temple-door and toward the altar drew.  

UT when all rites to Jove were duly done,  
Unto the King went up Bellerophon,  
To tell him of his fare upon the sea;  
So in the chamber named of porphyry25  
He found Jobates pacing to and fro,  
As on the day when first he bade him go  
And win the Solymi. O King, he said,  
All hail to thee! the water-thief is dead,  
His keel makes sport for children of the sea.  
AND I, Bellerophon, have news for thee,  

25Porphyry: a dark purplish rock with embedded crystals of feldspar.
And no more need it. But the time goes fast;
Into mine ears a tale the townsmen cast
With eager words, almost before my feet
The common earth without Jove's fame could meet;
I heard thy herald too say mighty things,
How sayest thou about the oaths of kings?
THE King's eyes glistened: O Corinthian,
He said, if there be such a twice-cursed man
As rules the foolish folk and punishesth,
And yet must breathe out lies with every breath,
Let him be thrice cursed, let the Gods make nought
Of all his prayers when he in need is caught!
WHAT sayest thou, then said Bellerophon,
If a man sweareth first to such an one,
And then to such another, and the twain
Cannot be kept, but one still maketh vain
The other? Then the King cast down his eyes:
What sayest thou, my son? What mysteries
Lie in these words of thine? Go forth and break
This chain of ours, and then return to take
Thy due reward: oft meseems so it is
That these our woes are forged to make thy bliss.
THEN laughed Bellerophon aloud, and said:
The Gods are kind to mortals, by my head!
But so much do they love me certainly
That more than once I shall not have to die;
And I myself do love myself so well
That each night still a pleasant tale shall tell
Of the bright morn to come to me. But thou,
Think of thy first vow and thy second vow!
For so it is that I may come again
Despite of all: and what wilt thou do then?
Ponder meanwhile if from ill deeds can come
Good hap to bless thee and thy kingly home!
AND even with that last word was he gone,
And the King, left bewildered and alone,
Sat down, and strove to think, and said at last:
Good were it if the next three months were passed.

26fane: temple.

I should be merrier, nigher though I were
Unto that end of all that all men fear.
THEN sent he for his captain of the guard,
And said to him: Now must thou e'en keep ward
Closer than heretofore upon the gates,
Because we know not now what thing awaits
The city, and Bellerophon will go
The truth of all these wondrous things to know:
So let none pass unquestioned; nay, bring here
Whatever man bears tales of woe or fear
Into the city, fain would I know all:
Nay, speak, what thinkest thou is like to fail?
BELIKE, the man said, he will come again,
And with my ancient master o'er us reign.
E'en as I came in did he pass me by,
And nowise seemed he one about to die.
Nay, said the King, thou speak'st but of a man;
Shall he prevail o'er what made corpses wan
Of many a stout war-hardened company?
METHINKS, O King, that such might even be,
The captain said; he is not of our blood;
He goes to meet the beast in other mood
Than has been seen amongst us, nor know I
Whether to name him mere man that shall die,
Or half a god; for death he feareth not,
Yet in his heart desire of life is hot;
Life he scorns not, yet will his laughter rise
At hearkening to our timorous miseries,
And all the self-wrought woes of restless men.
AH, said the King, belike thou lov'st him then?
Nay, for I fear him, King, the captain said,
And easier should I live if he were dead;
Besides, it seems to me our woes began
When down our streets first passed this godlike man,
And all our fears are puppets unto him;
That he may brighter show by our being dim,
The Gods have wrought them, as it seems to me.
WHAT wouldst thou do then that the man might be
A glorious memory to the Lycian folk,
A god who from their shoulders raised a yoke
Dreadful to bear; then, as he came, so went,
When he had fully wrought out his intent?
NAY, King, what say'st thou? Hast thou then forgot
Where he goes this eve? Nay, hear'st thou not
His horse-hooves' ring e'en now upon the street?
Look out! look out! thine eyes his eyes shall meet,
And see the sun upon his armour bright!
Yet the gold sunset brings about the night,
And the red dawn is quenched in dull grey rain.
THEN swiftly did the King a window gain,
And down below beheld Bellerophon,
And certes round about his head there shone
A glory from the west. Then the King cried:
O great Corinthian, happy mayst thou ride,
And bring us back our peace! The hero turned,
And through his gold hair still the sunset burned,
But half his shaded face was grey. He stayed
His eager horse, and round his mouth there played
A strange smile as he gazed up at the King,
And his bright hauberck tinkled ring by ring.
But as the King shrank back before his gaze,
With his left hand his great sword did he raise
A little way, then back into the sheath
He dropped it clattering, and cried: Life or death,
But never death in life for me, O King!
Therewith he turned once more; with sooty wing
The shill swifts down the street before him swept,
And from a doorway a tired wanderer leapt
Up to his feet, with wondering look to gaze
Upon that golden hope of better days.
THEN back the King turned; silent for awhile
He sat beneath his captain's curious smile,
Thinking o'er all the years gone by in vain.
At last he said: Yea, certes, I were fain
If I my life and honour so might save
That he not half alone, but all should have.
YEA, said the captain, good the game were then,
For thou shouldst be the least of outcast men;
So talk no more of honour; what say I?
Thou shouldst be slain in short time certainly,
Who hast been nigh a god before to-day!
Be merry, for much lieth in the way
Twixt him and life: and, to unsay the word
I said before, be not too much afeard
That he will come again. The Gods belike
Have no great will such things as us to strike,
But will grow weary of afflicting us;
Because with bowed heads, and eyes piteous,
We take their strokes. When thou sitt'st down to hear
A minstrel's tale, with nothing great or dear
Wouldst thou reward him, if he thought it well
Of wretched folk and mean a tale to tell;
But when the godlike man is midst the swords
He cannot 'scape; or when the bitter words,
That chide the Gods who made the world and life,
Fall from the wise man worsted in the strife;
Or when some fairest one whose fervent love
Seems strong in the world from out its curse to move,
Sits with cold breast and empty hands before
The hollow dreams that play about death's door;
When these things pierce thine ears, how art thou moved!
Though in such wise thou lov'st not nor art loved;
Though with weak heart thou leapest day wear day
As bough rubs bough; though on thy feeble way
Thou hast no eye to see what things are great,
What things are small, that by the hand of fate
Are laid before thee. Shall we marvel then,
If the Gods, like in other things to men,
(For so we deem them) think no scorn to sit
To see the play, and weep and laugh at it,
And will not have poor hearts and bodies vile
With unmelodious sorrow to beguile
The long long days of heaven; but these, in peace,
Trouble or joy, or waxing, or decrease,
Shall have no heed from them; ah, well am I
To be amongst them! never will I cry
Unto the Gods to set me high aloft;
For earth beneath my feet is sweet and soft,
And, falling, scarce I fall. Behold, O King,
Beasts weep not ever, and a short-lived thing
Their fear is, and their generations go
Untold-of past; and I who dwell slow,
Somewhat with them I feel, and deem nought ill
That my few days with more of joy may fill;
Therefore swift rede I take with all things here,
And short, if sharp, is all my woe and fear.

Now happier were I if Bellerophon,
This god on earth, from out our land were gone,
And well I hope he will not soon return;
Who knows? but if for some cause thou dost yearn
For quiet life without him, such am I
As, risking great things for great things, would try
To deal with him, if back again he comes
To make a new world of our peaceful homes.

Yet, King, it might well be that I should ask
Some earthly joy to pay me for the task;
And if Bellerophon returns again
And lives, with thee he presently will reign,
And soon alone in thy place will he sit;
Yea, even, and if he hath no will for it.
His share I ask then, yet am not so bold
As yet to hope within mine arms to fold
Philonoe thy daughter, any more
Than her, who on the green Sicilian shore
Plucked flowers; and dreamed no whit of such a mate
As holds the keys of life, and death, and fate;
Though that indeed I may ask, as in time,
The royal bed's air seem no outland clime
To me, whose sire, a rugged mountaineer,
Knew what the winter meant, and pinching cheer.
INTO the twinkling crafty eyes of him
The King looked long, until his own waxed dim
For thinking, and unto himself he said:
To such as fear is trouble ever dead,
How oft soe'er the troubous man we slay?
At last he spake aloud: Quick fails the day;
These things are ill to speak of in the night;

Now let me rest, but with to-morrow's light
Come thou to me, and take my word for all.

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27her, who on the green Sicilian shore/Plucked flowers: Persephone, abducted by Hades by Pluto while picking flowers in her native Sicily.
And disbelief in parting, should they die,
And joy that still they stood together thus.
Then, in a voice that love made piteous
Through common words and few, she spake and said:
What dost thou, Prince, with helmet on thine head
And sword girt to thee, this fair autumn eve?
Is it not yet a day too soon to leave
The place thou camest to this very noon?
HE said: No Lycian man can have too soon
His armour on his back in this our need,
Yea, steel perchance shall come to be meet weed
For such as thou art, lady. 28 Who knows whence
We next may hear tales of this pestilence?
Fair is this house: yet maybe, or to-day
The autumn evening wind has borne away
From its smooth chambers sound of woe and tears,
And shall do yet again. Death slayeth fears,
Now I go seek if Death too slayeth love.
A LITTLE toward him did one slim hand move,
Then fell again mid folds of her fair gown;
She spake: Farewell; a great man art thou grown;
Thou know’st not fear or lies; so fare thou forth:
If the Gods keep not what is most of worth
Here in the world, its memory bides behind;
And we perchance in other days may find
The end of hollow dreams we once have dreamed,
Waking from which such hopeless anguish seemed.
PALE was her face when these words were begun,
But she flushed red or e’er the end was done
With more than sunset. But he spake and said:
Farewell, farewell; God grant thee hardihead, 29
And growing pleasure on from day to day!
THEN toward the open gate he took his way
Nor looked aback, nor yet long did she turn
Her eyes on him, though sore her heart did yearn
To have some little earthly bliss of love

28*For such as thou art, lady: Morris may have inserted this passage as a mark of respect for non-Amazonian women warriors.
29Hardihead: firmness, courage.
Those wild-eyed wailing ones that closer drew
Scant rags about them, as with feet that bled
And failing limbs they tottered blind with dread,
Past house and hall. Now such-like had been these,
And guarded as the precious images
That hold a city's safety in their hands,
And dainty things from many distant lands
Were gathered round them in the house that stood,
Fair above all, within the hallowed wood,
Ten leagues from out the city; wondrous lore,
Folk deemed, within that house they pondered o'er,
And had been goddesses, but that they too
The hope of death if not its terror knew.
WHITE grew the captain's face these folk to see,
Yet midst his fear he muttered: Well be ye,
O Gods, who have no care to guard your own!
Perchance ye too weary of good are grown;
Look then on me, I shall not weary you,
I who once longed great things and high to do
If ye would have it so; come, bless me then,
Since ye are grown awear of good men!
So to his folk he turned, and bade them take
The holy women for the goddess' sake,
And give them into some kind matron's care.
So did they, and when bathed and clad they were,
He strove in vain to know their tale; for they
Had clean forgot all things before that day,
And only knew that they by some great curse
Had late been smitten, and mid fear of worse
Were leaving life behind. So when he knew
That with these woeful women he might do
Nought else, because their hearts were dead before
Their bodies, midst the fear and tumult sore
He went unto the gate, and waited there
If he perchance some other news might hear;
But nought befell that day to tell about,
And ridingless night came, and dark died out.
BUT just before the rising of the sun
The gate was smitten on, and there sat one
On a grey horse, and in bright armour clad.

Young was he, and strong built; his face seemed glad
Amidst of weariness, and though he seemed
Even as one who of past marvels dreamed.
Now turned the captain to him hastily,
And said: Fair fellow, needs thou must with me,
Nor speak thou good or bad before the King
Has heard thee. Therewith, scarcely wondering,
He rode beside the captain, and the twain
In no long time the palace gate did gain,
Which opened at a word the captain spake,
And past the warders standing half awake
They came unto the King: sleeping he lay,
While o'er his gold bed crept the daylight grey;
But softly thereunto the captain went,
And to his sleeping head his own down bent
And whispered; then as one who has just heard
Right in his ears the whisper of death's word,
He started up with eyes that, open wide,
Still saw not what the strange new light might hide;
Upright he sat, and panting for a while,
Till heeding at the last the captain's smile,
And low and humble words, he smiled and said:
Well be ye! for I dreamed that I was dead
Before ye came, and waking, thought that I
Was dead indeed, and that such things were nigh
As willingly men name not. What wouldst thou?
What new thing must the Lycians suffer now?
KING, said the captain, here I have with me
A man-at-arms who joyful seems to be;
Therefore I deem somewhat has come to pass,
Since for these many days no face here has
Made e'en a show of gladness, or of more
Than thinking good it were if all were o'er,
The slow tormenting hope, the heavy fear.
Speak thou, good friend! the King is fain to hear
The tale thou hast to tell. Then spake the man:
Good hap to me, indeed, that thus I can
Make glad the Lycian folk, and thee, O King!
But nowise have I wrought the happy thing,
But some immortal as meseems. Now I
With other two made up my mind to try
The chance of death or glorious life herein,
In good hope either rest from fear to win
Or many days of pleasure; so I armed
In this my father's gear, that had been charmed
Years long agone by spells, well worn I doubt
To nothing now, if one might clean tell out
The truth of all: then in Diana's fane
Anigh our house I met the other twain,
And forth we went at dawn, two days ago.
Not hard it was our rightful road to know,
For hour by hour of dreadful deaths we heard,
And still met fleeing folk, so sore afoot
That they must scowl upon us questionning.
And so at last we deemed the dreadful thing,
What death soever he dealt otherwhere
From time to time, must have his chiefest lair
Within Minerva's consecrated lands,
That stretch from where her mighty temple stands
Midst its wild olive-groves, until they meet
The rugged mountain's bare unwooded feet.
Thither we turned, and at the end of day
We reached the temple, and with no delay
Sought out the priests and told them of our rede.
THEY answered us that heavy was their need,
That day by day they dreaded death would come
And take them from the midst of that fair home,
And shortly, that when midnight was past o'er,
Their lives in that house they would risk no more,
But get them gone. All things are done, said they,
The sacred maids, who have not seen the day,
But in these precincts, count the minutes now
Until the midnight moon the way shall show;
Ten horse-loads of the precious things we have,
That somewhat of our past lives we may save
To bring us o'er the sea. So sorry cheer,
Fair sons, of meat or lodging get ye here,
For all is bare and blank as some hill-side;
Nor, if ye love your lives, will ye abide
Another minute here: for us, indeed,

One answer more from Pallas do we need;
And, that being got at, nothing stays us then.
WORN were the faces of these holy men,
And their eyes wandered even as they spake,
And scarcely did they move as men awake.
About that place, whose mighty walls of stone
Seemed waiting for the time when all was gone,
Except the presence of the Dreadful Maid,
Careless of who was glad and who afraid.
SHORTLY we answered; we would bide and see
What thing within the precinct there might be
Until the morn, and if we lived till then,
Further afield would seek this death of men.
They heard us wondering, or with scorn, but gave
Such cheer to us as yet they chanced to have;
And we, being weary, fell asleep withal
Within a chamber nigh the northern wall
Of the great temple. Such a dream I had,
As that I thought fair folk, in order glad,
Sang songs throughout a place I knew to be
A town whereof had tales been told to me
When I was but a youngling: years agone
Had I forgot it all, and now alone
The nameless place had come to me. O King,
I dreamed, I say, I heard much people sing
In happy wise; but even therewithal
Amidst my dream a great voice did there call,
But in a tongue I knew not; and each face
Was changed to utter horror in that place;
And yet the song rose higher, until all tune
Was strangled in it, and to shrill shrieks soon
It changed, and I sat upright in my bed,
Waked in an instant, open-mouthed with dread;
I know not why, though all about I heard
Shrill screams indeed, as though of folk afoot.
Mixed with a roar like white flame that doth break
From out a furnace-mouth: the earth did shake
Beneath my bed, and when my eyes I turned
Without the window, such a light there burned
As would have made the noon-tide sunshine grey.

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There on the floor one of my fellows lay,
Half-armed and groaning like a wounded man;
And circling round about the other ran,
With foaming lips as one driven mad with fear.
THEN I, who knew not what thing drew aear,
And scarce could think amidst my dread, sat still
Trembling a little space of time, until
To me from out the jaws of death was born,
Without a hope it seemed, a sudden scorn
Of death and fear; for all the worst I knew,
And many a thing seemed false that had been true,
And many a thing now seemed of little worth
That once had made the mean and sordid earth
All glorious. So with fixed and steady face
I armed myself, and turned to leave the place,
And passed from out it into the great hall
Of the very temple, where from wall to wall
There rolled a cloud of white and sulphurous smoke;
And there the remnant of the temple folk,
That had not heart enow to flee away,
Like dying folk upon the pavement lay,
And some seemed dead indeed. High o'er that gear
Stood golden Pallas, with her burnished spear
Glittering from out the smoke-cloud in that light,
That made strange day and ghastly of the night;
And her unmoved calm face that knew no smile
Cast no look down, as though she deemed too vile
The writhing tortured limbs, the sickening sound
Of dying groans of those that lay around,
Or to the pillars cling in agonies
Past telling; but now I turned mine eyes,
Grown used to death within a little space,
Unto the other end of that fair place,
Where black the wood of polished pillars showed
Against the dreadful light, that throbbed and glowed,
Changing, and changing back to what it was.
So, through their rows did I begin to pass,
And heavier grew the smoke-cloud as I went;
But I, upon the face of death intent,
And what should come thereafter, made no stay

Until two fathom of white pavement lay
Betwixt me and the grass: the lit-up trees
Sparkled like quick-fire in the light night breeze,
And turned the sky black, and their stems between
The black depths of the inner wood were seen;
Like liquid flame a brook leapt out from them,
And, turning, ran along the forest hem.
Twixt that and me: How shall I tell thereof,
And hope to 'scape hard word and bitter scoff?
L'T me say first that, changing horribly
That noise went on and seemed a part of me,
Pen as the light; unless by death I won
Quiet again; the earth's peace seemed long years gone,
And all its hopes poor toys of little worth.
Therefore I turned not, nor fell down to earth,
And still within my hand I held my sword,
And saw it all as I see thee, fair lord.

And this I saw: a mass, from whence there came
That fearful light, as from a heart of flame;
That black amid its radiance was that mass,
And black and claw-like things therefrom did pass,
Lengthening and shortening, and grey flocks of hair
Seemed moving on it with some inward air
The light bore with it; but in front of me
An unearthly changing dark bulk did I see,
That my heart told me was the monster's head,
The seat of all the will that wrought our dread;
And midst thereof two orbs of red flame shone
When first I came, and then again were gone,
Then came again, like lights on a dark sea,
As the thing turned. And now it seemed to me,
Moreover, that, despite the dreadful sound
That filled my very heart and shook the ground,
Mute was the horror's head, as the great shade
That sometimes, as in deep sleep we are laid,
Seems ready to roll over us, and crush
Our souls to nought amidst the shadowy hush:
Not might I know how that dread noise was wrought.
BUT, when unto the place I first was brought
Where now I stayed, and stared, I knew not well
The Classical Tale for February

If the thing moved; but deemed that I might tell
Ten fathoms o'er betwixt us, and midway
'Twixt me and it a temple-priest there lay,
Face foremost, armed, and in his hand a spear;
And as with fixed eyes I stood moveless there,
Striving to think how I should meet the thing,
Amidst that noise I heard his armour ring
As smitten by some stroke; and then I saw
Unto that hideous bulk the body draw,
And yet saw not what drew it; till at last
Into the huge dark mass it slowly passed.
Nor did the monster change; unless, methought,
A little whiter thereto I was brought;
And still my eyes were fixed on it: with hand
Upon my drawn-back sword I still did stand,
Mid thoughts of folk who meet dread things alone
In dreadful lands, and slowly turn to stone.
So stood I: quicker grew my fevered breath,
Long, long, the time seemed betwixt life and death,
And I began to waver therewithal,
And at the last I opened lips to call
Aloud, and made no sound; then fell my brand
Clanging adown from out my feeble hand,
And rest seemed sweet again; one step I made
Aback, to gain a huge pier's" deep black shade,
Then at my fallen sword in vain I stared,
And could not stoop to it. And then there blared
A new sound forth, I deemed a trumpet-blast,
And o'er mine eyes a dull thick veil seemed cast,
And my knees bent beneath me, and I fell
A dead heap to the earth, with death and hell
Once more a pain, and terrible once more,
Teaching me dreadful things of hidden lore,
Showing strange pictures to my soul forlorn
That cursed the wretched day when I was born.
THERE lay I, as it seemed, a weary form,
Nor knew I if I lived yet, or had died,
E'en as the other folk, of utter fear,

31pier: masonry used to strengthen a wall.

Bellerophon in Lycia

When in mine ears a new voice did I hear,
Nor knew at first what words it said to me;
Till my eyes opened, and I seemed to see,
Grown grey and soft, the marble pillars there,
And 'twixt their shafts afar the woodland fair,
And if through clear green water! then I heard
Close by my very head a kindly word:
Be of good cheer! the earth is earth again,
And thou hadst heart enough to face the bane
Of Lycia, though the Gods would not that thou
Shouldst slay him utterly; but rise up now
If so thou mayst, and help me, for I bleed,
And of some leechcraft have I present need.
Though no life-blood it is that flows from me.
THEN clearer grew mine eyes, and I could see
An armed man standing over-me, and I
Rose up therewith and stood unsteadily,
And gazed about, and saw that the fell light
Had vanished utterly: fast waned the night
And a cold wind blew, as the young dawn strove
With the low moon and the faint stars above,
And all was quiet. But that new-come man,
Standing beside me in the twilight wan,
Seemed like a god, come down to make again
Another earth all free from death and pain.
Till was he, fair he seemed unto me then
Beyond the beauty of the sons of men:
But as our eyes met, and mine, shamed and weak,
Dropped before his, once more he 'gan to speak:
Be not ashamed, he said, but look around,
And thou shalt see thy fear lie on the ground,
No more divine or dreadful. Then I saw
A tangled mass of hair, and scale, and claw,
Lie wallowing on the grey down-trodden grass;
Huge was it certes, but nought like the mass
Of horror mid the light my fear still told
My shuddering heart of, nor could I behold
Clearly the monster's shape in that dim light;
Yet gladly did I turn me from the sight
Unto my fellow, and I said: Hast thou
Some other shape unto mine eyes to show?
And is this part of the grim mockery
Where to the Gods have driven me forth to die?
Or art thou such a dream as meets the dead
When first they die? I am a man, he said,
E'en as thou art; thou livest, if I live;
And some god unto me such strength did give,
That this my father's father's sword hath wrought
Deliverance for the Lyceans, and made nought
This divine dread: but let us come again
When day is grown, and I have eased the pain
Of burning thirst that chokes me, and thine hands
Have swathed my hurts here with fair linen bands,
For somewhat faint I grow. So then we passed
Betwixt the pillars till we reached at last
The chamber where I erst had slept, and there
We drank, and then his hurts with water fair
I bathed, and swathed them; and by then the day
Showed how my fellows on the pavement lay
Dead, yet without a wound it seemed; and when
Into the pillared hall we came again,
From one unto the other did we go
That lay about the place, and even so
It was with them; then the new-comer sighed
And said: Belike it was of fear they died,
Yet wish them not alive again, for they
Had found death fearful on another day;
But gladly had I never seen this sight,
For I shall think thereof at whiles by night,
And wonder if all life is worth such woe:
But now unto the quarry let us go.
SO forth we went, but when we came whereas
The beast lay, slantwise o'er the wind-swept grass
Shone the low sun on what was left of him,
For all about the trodden earth did swim
In horrible corruption of black blood,
And in the midst thereof his carcass stood,
E'en like a keel beat down and cast away
At dead ebb high up in a sandy bay.
But when I gathered heart close up to go
And touch that master of all horror, lo,
How had he changed! for nothing now was there
But skin, beset with scale and dreadful hair
Drawn tight about the bones: flesh, muscle strong,
And all that helped the life of that great wrong,
Had ebbed away with life; his head, deep cleft
By the fair hero's sword-edge, yet had left
Three teeth like spears within it; on the ground
The rest had fallen, and now lay around
Half hidden in the marsh his blood had made;
Hollow his sides did sound when, still afraid
Of what he had been, with my clenched hand
I smote him. So a minute did we stand
Wondering, until my fellow said to me:
in the past night didst thou do valiantly,
So smite the head from off him, and then go
This finished work unto the King to show,
And tell him by that token that I come,
Who heretofore have had no quiet home
Either in Corinth or the Argive land.
Here till to-morrow hide I, to withstand
What new thing yet may come; for strange to me
Are all these things, nor know I if I be
Waking or sleeping yet, although methinks
My soul some foretaste of great bliss drinks.
So get thee to the work, and then go forth;
These coming days in sooth will show the worth
Of what my hand hath wrought! Weary he seemed,
And spake, indeed, well-nigh as one who dreamed;
But yet his word I durst not disobey.
With no great pain I smote the head away
From off the trunk, and humbly bade farewell
Into my godlike saviour from deep hell;
I got my horse, and to the saddle bound
The monster's head, whose long mane swept the ground,
Whose weight e'en now was no light pack-horse load,
And so with merry heart went on my road,
And made on toward the city, where I thought
A little after nightfall to be brought;
But so it was, that ere I had gone through
The wasted country and now well-nigh drew
Unto the lands where people yet did dwell,
So dull a humour on my spirit fell,
That at the last I might not go nor stand;
So, holding still the reins in my right hand,
I laid me down upon the sunburnt grass
Of the road-side, and just high noon it was.
BUT moonrise was it when I woke again;
My horse grazed close beside with dangling rein;
But when I called him, and he turned to me,
No burden on his back I now might see,
And wondered; for right firmly had I bound
The thing unto him; then I searched around
Lest he perchance had rolled, and in such wise
Had rid him of that weight; and as mine eyes
Grew used to the grey moonlight, I could trace
A line of greyish ashes, as from place
To greener place, the wandering beast had fed;
But nothing more I saw of that grim head.
Then much I wondered, and my fear waxed great,
And I 'gan doubt if there I should not wait
The coming of that glorious mighty one,
Who for the world so great a deed had done.
But at the last I thought it good to go
Unto the town e'en as he bade me do,
Because his words constrained me. Nought befell
Upon the road whereof is need to tell,
And so my tale is done; and though it be
That I no token have to show to thee,
Yet doubt not, King Jobates, that no more
The Gods will vex the land as heretofore
With this fell torment. Furthermore, if he
Who wrought this deed is no divinity
He will be here soon; so must thou devise,
O Lycian King, in whatso greatest wise
Thou wilt reward him; but for me, I pray
That thou wilt give me to him from to-day,
That serving him, and in his company,
Not wholly base I too become to be.
THE King and captain for a little while
Gazed each at each; an ugly covert smile
Marked round the captain's mouth, but the King stared
Blankly upon him, e'en as though he heard
A doom go forth against him; and again
The man who brought the news stared at the twain
With knitted brows, as greatly marvelling
Why they spake nought, until at last the King
Turned eyes upon him, and the captain spake:
CERTES, O King, brightly the day doth break
Of this man sayeth sooth; nor know I one
To do this deed except Bellerophon;
And so much certes hast thou honoured him
That nothing now thy glory can wax dim.
Because of his; and though indeed the earth
Held nought within it of such wondrous worth
As that which thou wilt give him in reward,
Not overmuch is it for such a sword,
And such a heart, the people's very friend.
SO spake he, and before his speech had end
His wonted face at last the King had got,
And spake unto the man: We doubt thee not;
Thy tale seems true, nor dost thou glorify
Thyself herein; certes thou wouldst abye
A heavy fate if thou shouldst lie herein;
So here shall thou abide till sight we win
Of him who wrought this deed; then shalt thou have
A good reward, as one both true and brave
As for a son of man; for he, meseems,
Who made an end of our so fearful dreams
Is scarcely man, though friend to me a man:
But now this tale of thine, that well began
And went on clearly, clearly has not told
The very shape of what thou didst behold.
NO, said the man; when I stood therebeside
I thought its likeness ever would abide
Within my mind! but now, what shall I say?
Fast thou not heard, O King, before to-day,
That it was three-formed? So men said to me,
Before its very body I did see,
That, lion-like, the beast's shape was before,
And that its goat-like hairy middle bore
A dragon's scaly folds across the waste
Itself had made. But I, who oft have faced
The yellow beast, and driven goats afield,
And shaken the black viper from my shield,
Can liken it to these things in no writ.
Nay, as I try e'en now to think of it,
Meseems that when I woke in the past night,
E'en like a dream dissolved by morning light,
Its memory had gone from me; though, indeed,
Nought I forgot of all my dreadful need.
Content thee, King, with what I erst have told;
For when I try his image to behold
Pain grows my heart again, mine eyes wax dim,
Nor can I set forth what I deemed of him
When he lay dead. Hearken! what thing draws nigh?
For from outside there rang a joyous cry,
That grew, still coming nearer, till they heard
From out the midst thereof a well-known word,
The name Bellerophon: then from his bed
The King arose, and clad himself, and said:
Go, captain, set the King Bellerophon
Without delay upon the royal throne,
And tell him that I come to make my prayer,
That, since for a long time I have sat there,
And know no other trade than this of King,
He of his bounty yet will add a thing
To all that he hath given, and let me reign
Along with him. Send here my chamberlain,
That I may clothe me in right fitting guise
To do him honour in all goodly wise.
So spake his lips, but his eyes seemed to say:
Long is it to the ending of the day,
And many a thing may hap ere eventide;
And well is he who longest may abide.
SO from the presence did the captain pass,
When now the autumn morn in glory was,
And when he reached the palace court, he found
/The eager people flocking all around
The door of the great hall, and diversely
Men showed their joyance at that victory.
But in the hall there stood Bellerophon
Anigh the dais, and the young sun shone
On his bright arms, and round from man to man
In eager notes the hurried question ran,
And, smiling still, he answered each; but yet
Small share that circle of his tale did get,
Because distraught he was, and seemed to be
As he who looks the face of one to see
Who long delays; but when the captain's staff
Cleft through the people's eager word and laugh,
And, after that, his fellow of the night
Bellerophon beheld, his face grew bright
As one who sees the end. Withal he said
As they drew nigh: Has the King seen the head?
Know he what it betokens? For, behold!
Before the sun of that day grew acold
Whereon thou left'st me, all that heap was gone
Thou sawest there, both hair and flesh and bone;
So when this dawn I mounted my good steed,
I looked to thee to show forth that my deed,
Lest all should seem a feigned tale or a dream.
Master, the other said, thou well mayst deem,
That what thy will loosed, my will might not hold;
E'en as thy tale, so must my tale be told,
And nought is left to show of that dread thing.
EVEN as he spake did folk cry on the King,
And now to right and left fell back the crowd,
And down the lane of folk gold raiment glowed,
And blare of silver trumpets smote the roof.
Then said the captain: Cerites, no more proof
The King will ask, to show that thou hast done
The glorious deed that was for thee alone;
Be glad, thy day is come, and all is well!
BUT on his sword the hero's left hand fell,
And he looked down and muttered 'neath his breath:
Trust slayeth many a man, the wise man saith;
Yet must I trust perseverance. He stood and heard
The joyful people's many-voiced word
Change into a glad shout; the feet of those
Who drew anear came closer and more close,
Till their sound ceased, and silence filled the hall:
And then a soft voice on his ears did fall,
That seemed the echo to his yearning thought:
Look up, look up! the change of days hath brought
Sweet end to our desires, and made thee mine!
HE raised his eyes, and saw gold raiment shine
Before him in the low sun; but a face
Above it made the murmuring crowded place
Silent and lone; for there she stood, indeed,
His troubled scarce-kept life's last crown and meed;
Her sweet lips trembled, her dear eyes 'gan swim
In tears that fell not, as she reached to him
One hand in greeting, while a little raised
And restless was the other, as she gazed
Into his eyes, and lowly was her mien;
But yet a little forward did she lean,
As though she looked for sudden close embrace,
Yet feared it 'neath the strange eyes of that place.
BUT though his heart was melted utterly
Within him, he but drew a little nigh,
And took her hand, and said: What hour is this
That brings so fair a thing to crown my bliss?
What land far off from that which first I knew?
How shall I know that such a thing is true,
Unless some pain yet fall on thee and me?
Rather this hour is called eternity,
This land the land of heaven, and we have died
That thus at last we might go side by side
For ever, in the flower-strewn happy place.
THEN closer to her drew his bright flushed face;
Well-nigh their lips met, when Jobates cried:
Good hap, Corinthian! for thou hast not died;
The pale land holds no joy like thou shalt have
If yet awhile the gods thy dear life save;
Yet mayst thou fear, indeed, for such thou art,
That yet the gods will have thee play thy part
In heaven and not on earth. But come on now,
O fell the noisy day to feastful night,
For sleep was slow to hush the new delight
Of the freed folk; and in the royal house
Loud did the revellers grow, and clamorous,
And yet that too must have an end at last,
And to their sleeping-places all folk passed

Not long before the shepherds' sleep grew thin.
But listening to the changing of the din,
Philotas lay long upon her bed,
Nor would sweet sleep come down to bless her head,
No, not when all was still again; for she,
Oppressed with her new-found felicity,
Had fallen to thoughts of life and death and change,
And through strange lands her wearied heart did range,
And knew no peace; therefore at last she rose
When all was utter stillness, and stood close
Unto the window. Such a night it was
That a thin wind swept o'er the garden-grass
And loosened the sick leaves upon the trees;
Promise of rain there was within the breeze,
Yet was the sky not wholly overcast,
But o'er the moon yet high the grey drift passed,
And with a watery gleam at whiles she shone,
And cast strange wavering shadows down upon
The trembling beds of autumn blossoms tall,
And made the dusk of the white garden wall
Gleam like another land against the sky.

SHE turned her from the window presently,
And went unto her dainty bed once more;
But as she touched its silk a change came o'er
Her anxious heart, and listening there she stood
Counting the eager throbbing of her blood;
But nought she heard except the night's dim noise;
Then did she whisper (and her faint, soft voice
Seemed hoarse and loud to her): Yet will I go
To Pallas' shrine, for fain I am to know
If all things even yet may go aright,
For my heart fails me. To the blind dusk night
She showed her loveliness awhile half-veiled,
After her words, as though her purpose failed;

Then softly did she turn and take to her
A dusky cloak, and hid her beauty rare
In its dark folds, and turned unto the door;
But ere she passed its marble threshold o'er
Stayed pondering, and thus said: Alas, alas!
To-morrow must I say that all this was
And is not, this sweet longing? what say men,
It cometh once and cometh not again,
This first love for another? holds the earth
Within its circle aught that is of worth
When it is dead? and this is part of it,
This measureless sweet longing that doth flit,
Never to come again, when all is won.
And is our first desire so soon forborne,
Like to the rose-bud, that through day and night
In early summer strives to meet the light,
And in some noon-tide of the June bursts sheath,
And ere the eve is past away in death?
Belike love dies then like the rest of life?
Or falls asleep until it mix with strife
And fear and grief? and then we call it pain,
And curse it for its labour lost in vain.
Sweet pain! be kind to me and leave me not!
Leave me not cold, with all my grief forgot,
And all the joy consumed I thought should fill
My changing troubled days of life, until
Death turned all measuring of the days to nought!
And thou, O death, when thou my life hast caught
Within thy net, what wilt thou with my love,
That now I deem no lapse of time can move?
O death, maybe that though I seem to pass
And come to nought, with all that once I was,
Yet love shall live which once was part of me,
And hold me in his heart despite of thee,
And call me part of him, when I am dead
As the world talks of dying. So she said,
But scarcely heard her voice, and through the door
Of her own chamber passed; light on the floor
Her white feet fell, her soft clothes rustled nought,
As slowly, wrapped in many a changing thought,
Unto the Maiden's shrine she took her way
That midmost of the palace precincts lay;
But in a chamber that was hard thereby,
Although she knew it not, that night did lie
Her love that was, her lord that was to be.
THROUGH the dark pillared precinct silently
She went now, pausing every now and then
To listen, but heard little sound of men;
Though far off in the hill-side homesteads crowed
The waking fowl, or restless milch-kine lowed
In the fair pastures that her love had saved;
And from the haven, as the shipmen heaved
Their sail aloft, a mingled strange voice came.
So as she went, across her flitted shame
Of her own loneliness, and eager love
That shut the world out so, and she 'gan move
With quicker steps unto the temple-stead,
Scarce knowing what her soft feet thither led.
WITHIN an open space the temple was,
And dark-stemmed olives rose up from the grass
About it, but a marble path passed o'er
The space betwixt the cloister and its door
Of some ten yards; there on its brink she stayed,
And from the cloister watched the black trees swayed
In the night breeze. 'E'en as a bether might
Shrink from the water, from the naked night
She shrank a little; the wind wailed within
The cloister walls, the clouds were gotten thin
About the moon, and the night 'gan to wane;
Then, even as she raised her skirts again,
And put her foot forth, did she hear arms clash,
And fear and shame her heart did so abash,
She shrunk behind a pillar; then the sound
Of footsteps smote upon the hardened ground,
And 'gainst the white steps of the shrine she saw
From out the trees a tall dark figure draw
Unto the holy place: the moon withal
Ran from a cloud now, and her light did fall
Upon a bright steel helm; she trembled then,
But her first thought was not of sons of men;
Of the armed goddess, rather, did she think,
And closer in her hiding-place did shrink.
THEN though the moon grew dull again, yet she
Ten shapes of armed men at the last could see
Steal up the steps and vanish from the night,
And a sharp pang shot through her; but afoot she
Felt not now of gods; she murmured low:
What do these men-at-arms in such guise now
Amidst the feast? God help me, we are caught
Within a brazen net! And with that thought
No more delay she made, but girt her gown
Unto her, and with swift feet went adown
The marble steps, and so from tree to tree,
Through all the darkest shadow, silently
Gained the dark side of the brass temple door;
And through its chink she saw the marble floor
Just feebly lit by some small spark of light
She saw not, and the gleam of armour white,
And knew that she unto the men was close.
'E'en as some sound that loud and louder grows
Within our dreams and yet is nought at all
She heard her heart, as clinging to the wall
She strove to listen vainly; but at last
All feebleness from out her did she cast
With thought of love, and death that drew anear,
And therewithal a low voice did she hear
She thought she knew. Milo the Colchian?

Milo the Colchian: Morris invented the identities of these three would-be assassins (Milo the Colchian, Chremes, and The Clearer of the Shore).
Or, at the worst, without a sword to strike
Or shield to ward withal; his wont it is
To have few by him; on this night of bliss
Those few of night-cropped herbs 3140
And deep in slumber like short death are sunk:
So light our work is; yet let those who lack
Heart thereunto e'en at this hour go back;
 Though let these take good heed, that whatso'er
We risk hereafter they in likewise share,
Except the risk of dying by his sword.
HE ceased awhile, and a low muttered word
Seemed to say, We are ready: then he said:
When he is slain, then shall ye bear his bed
Into this shrine, and burn what burned may be
In little space; but into the deep sea,
Thou Cleaver of the Shore, with thy two men,
Shalt bear him forth. Fellows, what say we then,
When on the morn the city wakes to find
Its saviour gone? This: Men are fools and blind
And the Gods all-wise: this man born on earth
By some strange chance, yet was of too great worth
To live, and go as common men may go;
Therefore the Gods, who set him work to do,
When that was done, had no more will to see
His head grow white; or with man's frailty
Burn out his heart; they might not hear him curse
His latter days, as unto worse and worse
He fell at last; therefore they took him hence
To make him sharer in omnipotence,
And crown him with their immortality,
Nor may ye hope his body more to see.
These ashes of the web wherein last lay
His godlike limbs that took your fear away,
(Limbs now a very god's), this fire-stained gold
That, unharmed, very god might nowise hold,
Are left for certain signs: so shall ye rear
A temple to him nigh the gate; and bear
Gifts of good things unto the one who wrought

Deliverance for you, when ye e'en were brought
Unto the very gate of death and hell.
Fellows, spread vaguely this tale that I tell!
But thou, O Chremes, when the work is done,
Get straight unto the forest all alone,
And with some slaughtered beast come back again
Ere noon, as though of hearers thou wert fain;
Folk know thee for a wanderer through the wood,
So make thy tale up as thou deemest good
Of voices heard by thee at dead of night;
So shall our words live and all things be right.
Come, then; the night is changing; good it were
That dawn's first glimmer did not find us here!
So spake he, and then opened wide the door,
And all seemed lonely there as heretofore;
So one by one adown the steps they went,
Setting their anxious faces to the goal
Of the White Chamber. But Philonoe,
Fair-footed, tender-limbed, and where was she?
Her sick heart did but note the name and place
They spoke of, ere she moved her woe-worn face
From the cold brass, and stayed to hear no more,
But stole away as silent as before,
Keeping love back till all were lost or won;
Nor knew she what set her feet upon
Till, panting, through his chamber-door she passed;
There through the dusk a quick glance round she cast
And saw his men asleep, nor knew if they
Were dead, or if in sleep indeed they lay;
Then with such haste as a spent man, borne down
A swift stream, catches at some bare bough brown,
From off the wall she took sword, shield, and spear,
Helm and helm, and drew his bed anear,
And stayed not now, nor thought, but on his breast,
Laid bare before her, a light hand she pressed,
And as he started upright in the bed
Beneath her touch, bowed down to him and said:
Speak not, but listen to Philonoë,
Thy love, and save thy life for thee and me!
Thy foes are on thee! make no more delay
As thou art wise! Needs must I go away;
I do my part; one minute more shall show,
If love in death or life we are to know.
HIS lips yet trembled, yet his heart did ache
With longing, ere he felt he was awake
And knew that she was gone, and knew not where:
So driving back desire he armed him there
Over his nakedness, and hastily
Caught up his weapons, and turned round to see
What help was nigh: and when he saw his men
Lie on the floor as dead, well deemed he then
His hour was come; and yet he felt as though
He scarce might tell if it were hard to go,
So short all life seemed that must end at last:
But therewith nowise hope from him he cast,
But on the golden bed he took his stand,
And poised the well-steeled spear in his right hand,
And waited listening. Mid the fallen leaves' sound,
Driven by the autumn wind along the ground,
Footfalls of stealthy men he seemed to hear;
Yet nowise might that minute teach him fear,
Who life-long had not learned to speak the name;
Calm to his lips his steady breath still came,
Well-nigh he smiled; wide open were his eyes,
As though they looked to see life's mysteries
Unfolded soon before them: as he gazed
Through the dusk room, he heard the light latch raised
And saw the door move. Even therewithal
A gleam of bright light from the sky did fall,
As from a fleecy cloud the white moon ran,
And smiling, stern, unlike the face of man,
His helmed head high o'er the black-shadowed floor
Showed strange and dreadful, as the ivory door
Swung back on well-oiled hinges silently.
SILENCE a little space yet, then a cry
Burst from his lips, and through the chamber rang
A shriek of fear therewith, and a great clang
Of falling arms, and the bright glittering brand
Instead of the long spear was in his hand.
But for his foes, across the threshold lay
Their leader slain, and those his fellows, they
Hung wavering by the door, and feared the night,
And feared the godlike man, who in his might
Seemed changed indeed according to the tale
They were to tell: but as with faces pale
And huddled spears they hung there, in their doubt
If he were God or man, a mighty shout
Came from his lips again, and there was cast
Across the windy night a huge horn's blast,
Mournful, loud, and long-enduring; and they fled
This way and that, pursued by nought but dread.
SUCH strange tales of that night of fear they told
In after days. Some said they did behold,
As through the mighty outer door they ran,
A woman greater than a child of man,
All armed and helmed: some told of a bright flame
Glowing about the hero, when they came
Unto the door, and said that his one word
Had slain their leader swifter than a sword.
SUCH for Bellerophon, awhile he stood
Hight to the door until his wrathful mood
Changed into scorn; and then the moonlight wan
With kindled light he helped, and then the man
His spear had reached in strong arms he upraised;
But when he saw the eyes on him gazed
With dead stare, then he knew the captain's face.
Proud, said he, fear hath brought thee to this case;
Long hast thou lived for me: but is this all?
Will not the voice of Sthenocea call
O'er the green waves to ghosts of lovers dead,
Are yet the bridal wreath is on my head?
EVEN as he spake he heard the horn once more,
And then a sound as if on a low shore
The sea were breaking, then a swelling shout
That louder grew, till his own name leapt out
From midst of it, and then he smiled and cried:
Rectus, thy casket held a goodly bride,
A noble realm for me! O love, I come;
Surely thine heart has won me a fair home,
Instead of that straight house I should have had
If these eyes had not made thy dear heart glad.
Therewith he sheathed his sword, and, stepping o'er
His cumbered threshold, made for the great door,
Whither the wakened house now thronging ran:
Men armed and unarmed, child and ancient man;
For death it was to wind that mighty horn,
But when in dangerous battle it was borne
By the King's hand. Now nigher as he drew
Unto the door he 'gan to see therethrough
The points of steel tossing amid the light
Of torches, and the wind of waning night
Bore sound of many men on it; but dim
The pillared hall was yet. Then close to him
A slim close-mantled woman came and said:
Go forth and speak; we twain are not yet dead;
I think we shall not die at all, dear heart;
Farewell! His soul and body seemed to part,
As swiftly, shadow-like, she passed him by,
And toward her chamber went: unwittingly
He gained the great door's platform, and looked down
Upon the tumult of the gathering town,
While at his back a dark mass clustered now,
With helmet on the head, and spear and bow;
So, gathering earthly thoughts, he stood and cried:
What will ye, good men, that ye make this tide
More noisy than the day? What will ye do?
Speak out, that we may rest, some one of you!
Then stood a man forth, clad in armour bright,
And cried aloud: O, well betide the night
That hides thee not from us, Bellerophon!
Surely we deemed some horror had been done,
And deemed that the Gods had ta'en thee from our hands;
Because the horn, the terror of far lands,
The gift of Neptune, did we seem to hear.
Then said the hero: Ah, then all the fear
The beast divine brought with it is not gone!
Masters, ye dreamed belike, nor dreamed alone
Strange dreams; for I dreamed too, that all-armed men
Beset my door to take my life; and when
I went therefrom c'en now, why yet I dreamed
But when to his own door Bellerophon
Was come, the captain’s body was clean gone,
And the drugged men were waking. Then he thought:
Was it a dream, indeed, that these things brought
Before mine eyes? Nay, my lips tremble yet
With that sweet touch. My breast may more forget
This hauberk’s weight, than that sweet clinging hand.
I dreamed not, and this haunted Lycian land
Holds for me good and evil infinite.
So be it, and the new returning light
Shall bring new rede to guard my troubled ways.
May the Gods give beginning of good days!
Then on the bed he sat to think of her,
But ere the end of the grey time was there
His head had fallen aside; sleeping he lay,
And let the bright sun bring about the day.

He woke at last, and fresh and joyous felt,
As forth he went; no sword within his belt
He set that morn; he bore no biting spear;
But clad he was in gold and royal gear,
Such as a King might bear in Saturn’s reign;
And in such wise the great hall did he gain,
And on the ivory throne he sat him down,
And felt the golden circle of the crown,
But light as yet, upon his unused head.
Then to his presence were strange people led;
Hunters from far-off corners of the realm,
Shipmen with hands well hardened by the helm,
Merchants who in strange tongues must bid him thrive,
And dainty cherished things unto him give:
And still he wearied, and their words forgot,
And wondered why the other King came not.
BUT yet, before the ending of the morn,
The casket that his own hands once had borne
Was brought unto him by a man, who spake
In this wise: King Jobates bids thee take,
O King Bellerophon, what lies herein,
And saith that since thine office doth begin
This day, right good it were to judge of this,
If the man did so utterly amiss

To strive to keep his oath. He bids thee say
Withal if thou wilt have what yesterday
He gave unto thine hands, and, taking it,
Forget wild dreams that o’er the year did flit.
THEN King Bellerophon looked down and drew
A letter from that casket that he knew,
And opened it and read; and in such wise
It gave the key to half-deemed mysteries.
King Prætus to Jobates, King of men,
Sends goodly greeting. Dost thou mind thee when
I saved thee from the lions? then I had
One gift from thee which has not made me glad,
Thy daughter; though a goddess, all men said,
Had scarce been fairer at my board and bed.
Another thing thou gavst me then, an oath
To do my bidding once, if lieve‘ or loath
It were to thee. Now bring all to an end,
And slay the man who bears this, once my friend,
And still too close unto my memory
That on my skirts his treacherous blood should lie.
Take heed, though, that I say, myself, at whiles:
The Gods are full of lies and luring smiles,
And know no faith. And this Bellerophon
May be a god; being even such an one
As seemeth kind beyond the wont of men,
Just and far-seeing, brave in those times when
Men’s hearts grow sick with fear. Lo, such is he,
And yet a monster! He shall dwell with thee
Life-long, perchance; and once or twice Desire
Shall burn up all these things, as with a fire;
And he shall tread his kindness under foot,
And turn a liar e’en from his heart’s root,
And turn a wretched fool. Yea, what say I?
Turn a mere trembling coward, loth to die,
Rather than to.all this. So take him, then,
While yet thou deemst him first of mortal men,
And in forefront of battle let him fall;
Or, lonely, on some foeman’s spear-swept wall,

Believe: agreeable.
If it may be, that he may leave behind
A savour, sweet in some men's mouths, nor find
That he has fallen to hell while yet he lives.
Such counsel to thee, friend, King Proetus gives,
A hapless man. But happy mayst thou dwell,
As thou shalt keep thy faith. Live hale and well!
Nepheus clear he saw these latter words of it,
For many a memory through his heart did flit,
Blinding his eyes belike: at last his head
He raised, and to the messenger he said:
Say to Jobates that I deem the man
Did even with his oath as such men can,
Who fear the Gods so much they may not tell
What gifts men give them. Say that all is well,
That I will take the gift he gave to me,
And long right sore that World's Desire\(^\text{37}\) to see.
SO the man went, and left Bellerophon
Pensive, and pondering on the days long gone
That brought him unto this: his happy love
The heart within him did to pity move;
He thought: Alas! and can it ever be
That one can say, Thou art enough for me;
And I, and I, wilt thou not suffer it,
That I, at least, before thy feet may sit
Until perchance I grow enough for thee?
Alas, alas! and can it ever be
That thus a heart shall plead and plead in vain?
SO did he murmur; but withal a strain
Of merry music made him lift his head,
Slaying all thought of suffering folk or dead;
And even as a man new-made a god,
When first he sets his foot upon the sod
Of Paradise, and like a living flame
Joy wraps him round, he felt, as now she came
Clear won at last, the thing of all the earth
That made his fleeting life a little worth.
MY heart faints now, my lips that tell the tale

\(^{37}\)World's Desire: Morris applied the same phrase to Eurydice in "The Story of Orpheus and Eurydice."

Falter to think that such a life should fail;
That use, and long days dropping one by one,
As the wan water frets away the stone,
Should change desires of men, and what they bring,
E'en while their hearts with sickening longing cling
Unto the thought that they are still the same,
When all they were is grown an empty name.
O Death-in-life, O sure pursuer, Change,\(^\text{38}\)
Be kind, be kind, and touch me not, till strange,
Changed too, thy face shows, when thy fellow Death
Delays no more to freeze my faltering breath!
HE'dull day long had faded into night
Ere all was done; taper and red fire-light
Cast on the wall's fair painted images.
Shadows confused of some: amidst these, 3500
The old men on the dais; down below
Amid the youths was stir and murmur now;
Some said, they fain had known a little more
Of that Bellerophon ere all was o'er;
Some said, that if the man lived, sure it was
That happiness of his would soon o'erpass,
Because he kept back something of the stake:
Some said the story back their thoughts did take
To Argos, and the deeds there, and the end
Whereto the feet of Stenoboea did wend
So surely from the first, not without praise
Of some, they said: some wondered of the days
That Proetus had, and if the godlike man
And he, who clung to joy as cowards can,
E'er met again, and what things they forgot
And what remembered, if it came to that.
But one youth who had sat alone and sad,
While others friends and loves beside them had,
Rose up amid their talk, and slowly turned
To where the many lights that thereby burned
Scarce reached, and in that dimness walked awhile;

\(^{38}\)Change: Other Bellerophon-legends included accounts of an unhappy later life, in which attempts to fly to heaven on the winged-horse Pegasus offended Zeus.
And when he came back, with a quivering smile
On his sad face, gazed at the elders there,
As though he deemed his place among them were,
Who had nigh done with life; and one or two
Among the youths looked up, as if they knew
The pain that ailed him. Many-peopled earth!
In foolish anger and in foolish mirth,
In causeless wars that never had an aim,
In worshipping the kings that bring thee shame,
In spreading lies that hide wrath in their breast,
In breaking up the short-lived days of rest,
In all thy folk care nought for, how they cling
Each unto each, fostering the foolish thing,
Nought worth, grown out of nought, that lightly lies
'Twixt throat and lps, and yet works miseries!
While in this love that touches every one,
Still wilt thou let each man abide alone,
Unholpen, with his pain unnameable!
Is it, perchance, lest men should come to tell
Each unto other what a pain it is,
How little balanced by the sullied bliss
They win for some few minutes of their life;
Lest they die out and leave thee void of strife,
Empty of all their yearning and their fear,
'Twixt storm and sunshine of thy changing year?

ATE February days; and now, at last,
Might you have thought that winter's woe was past
So fair the sky was, and so soft the air.
The happy birds were hurrying here and there,
As something soon would happen. Reddened now
The hedge, and in gardens many a bough
Was overbold of buds. Sweet days, indeed,
Although past road and bridge, through wood and mead,
Swift ran the brown stream, swirling by the grass,
And in the hillside hollows snow yet was.
WITHIN sound of the city, yet amid
Patches of woodland that its white walls hid,
The house was where the elders sat this tide,
The young folk with them; by the highway-side
The first starred yellow blossoms of the spring
Some held in hand; some came in, hurrying
From deeper in the woods, and now in fold
Of skirt and gown its treasures did they hold;
And soon to garland-making youth and maid
Were set down: then the Swabian smiled, and said:
How' e'er it be that I, so old and grey,
A priest too, yet again must have to say
More words of Venus, judge ye, maids: in sooth,
I, wandering once in long-past days of youth,
Came to the place my tale shall tell of now.
Vague tales, wherein I was well fain to trow,
Being dreamy and a youth, I oft had heard
Thereof, yet somewhat I did grow afeard
Before that cavern, although not alone
I was there, and the morn was such an one
As this fair morn has been: my fellow there

39Swabian: Swabia or Schwaben, one of five medieval duchies of the East Frankish Kingdom, lay mostly within modern Baden-Württemberg and eastern Switzerland, and bordered Alsace in the west and Bavaria in the east.
Was an old forester with thin white hair,  
Lo you, like mine now! but his deep-set eyes,  
Bright mid his wrinkles, made him seem right wise,  
As I would fain seem, maidens. Ye may wot  
That many a tale of that place had he got,  
Because nearby, child, boy, and man, had he  
Dwelt ever: so on a felled oaken tree  
We sat beside the cave's mouth there of old  
While he this story, that I looked for, told.

The Hill of Venus:  
The Medieval Tale for February

Narrative:
In a dense forest, the melancholy thirty-year-old Walter approaches the Venusberg, hurls away his sword, and prepares for death, but he hears instead a hymn to Venus, observes a pageant of lovers, and finally encounters the goddess herself, "naked, alone, unsmiling." Passionate lovemaking slakes his unfocused sense of longing and anticipation, but Venus evades all questions about the past or future, and when Walter's growing frustrations at the grotto's remoteness and vacuity give way to renewed despair, he resolves to leave.

As soon as he exits, Walter's loneliness returns, and he wanders in solitude till he meets a company of pilgrims whom he accompanies to Rome. There he resolves on a desperate expedient, which he hopes may clarify and perhaps atone for his past errors: he will seek audience and perhaps absolution from the Pope himself. The prelate agrees to see him, but Walter becomes impatient with the Pope's simplistic preachments, and he stubbornly defends his "love, that never more shall bring Delight to me or help me anything" (II. 1328-29) as an act of paradoxical fidelity, which promises no earthly or heavenly reward.

During the audience, the formerly impassive Venus has also appeared briefly to Walter for the first time since his departure, and he begins to feel for her a kind of protective anxiety, for he sees that she too is subject to a disapproving Christian order. This leads him to deliver an impassioned apology for Venus to the astonished pontiff, who predictably writes Walter off as a spiritual loss, no more to be saved than the Pope's dry staff can spring into bloom.

Back from Rome, Walter finds the "dark door" of Venus's cavern once again, and he returns to its bittersweet mixture of complex joy and intense frustration. His exile is needless, however,