Critical Remarks:

"The Doom of King Acrisius"'s division into de facto subtales may illustrate Morris's early reluctance to acknowledge how many changes would be required to reconcile the internal responses of his revised protagonists with their unchanged outer fates. Morris had a natural talent for short monologues as well as full sequential narratives, and his characters are not thinly drawn, but he sometimes infuses characters with an emotional depth which clashes with constraints imposed by his sources.

Morris often solved this problem later by highlighting incidents he wished to deepen and elaborate in this way from longer and more diffuse plots—in "The Lovers of Gudrun" and "Bellerophon in Lycia," for example, and other tales which focus on a single voyage, point a particular moral, or test a single love. In "The Doom of King Acrisius," the king's guilty attempt to avert his fate divides the tale neatly into the two subplots mentioned above, but Morris's interest in the second eventually overpowers the first.

The auditors' mood shifts slightly at the conclusion of this tale, the sequence's first legend of active heroism. Prompted perhaps by its victories over "mighty monsters," they sense

... dim foreshadowings of what yet might come
When they perfume must leave that new-gained home.

See Bellas, 57-74; Boos, 76-82; Calhoun, 134-37; Oberg, 41-43; Silver, 73.

Manuscripts:

In addition to the usual fair copy in Huntington Library 4618, a rough early draft is found in Huntington Library 6462.

The tale is included in May Morris's list of quarto manuscript drafts, where it precedes "The Proud King."

ARGUMENT

ACRISIUS, KING OF ARGOS, BEING WARNED BY AN ORACLE THAT THE SON OF HIS DAUGHTER DANAÆ SHOULD SLAY HIM, SHUT HER UP IN A BRAZEN TOWER BUILT FOR THAT END BESIDE THE SEA: THERE, THOUGH NO MAN COULD COME NIGH HER, SHE NEVERTHELESS BORE A SON TO JOVE, AND SHE AND HER NEW-BORN SON, SET ADRIFT ON THE SEA, CAME TO THE ISLAND OF SERIPHOS. THENCE HER SON, GROWN TO MANHOOD, SET OUT TO WIN THE GORGON'S HEAD, AND ACCOMPLISHED THAT END BY THE HELP OF MINERVA; AND AFTERWARDS RESCUED ANDROMEDA, DAUGHTER OF CEPHEUS, FROM A TERRIBLE DOOM, AND WEDDED HER. COMING BACK TO SERIPHOS HE TOOK HIS MOTHER THENCE, AND MADE FOR ARGOS, BUT BY STRESS OF WEATHER CAME TO THESSALY, AND THERE, AT LARISSA, ACCOMPLISHED THE PROPHECY, BY UNWITTINGLY SLAYING ACRISIUS. IN THE END HE FOUNDED THE CITY OF MYCENÆ, AND DIED THERE.

OW of the King Acrisius shall ye hear,
Who thinking he could free his life
Did that which brought but death on him at last.
In Argos' did he reign in days long past,
And had one daughter, fair as man could see,

Called in the ancient stories Danaë;
But as her fairness day by day grew more,
Unto his ears came wandering words of lore,

L'Argos: an eastern Peloponnesian city.
The Classical Tale for April

Which bade him wot that either soon or late
He should be taken in the toils of fate,
And by the fruit of his own daughter’s womb
Be slain at last, and set within his tomb;
Be there heavy sorrow on him fell,
That she whom he was bound to love so well
Must henceforth be his deadliest dread and woe.
LONG time he pondered what were best to do;
And whilst he thought that he would send her forth
To wed some king far in the snowy north,³
And whilst that by great gifts of goods and gold
Some lying prophet might be bought and sold
To swear his daughter he must sacrifice,
If he would yet find favour in the eyes
Of the dread gods who govern everything;
And sometimes seemed it better to the King,
That he might some shed the shedding of her blood
By leaving her in some far lonely wood,
Wherein the Dryads might the maiden find,
Or beasts might slay her, following but their kind.
SO passed his anxious days, until at last,
When many a plot through his vexed brain had passed,
He lacked the heart his flesh and blood to slay,
Yet neither would he she should go away
From out his sight, or be at large at all;
Therefore his wisest craftsmen did he call,
And bade them make for him a tower foursquare,
Such as no man had yet seen anywhere,
For therein neither stone nor timber was,
But all was fashioned of mere molten brass.

2toils of fate: Lemprière mentions that Acrisius drove his brother from the kingdom, but his misdeeds are not specified in Morris’s tale.
3To wed some king far in the snowy north: Acrisius’s plan to marry Danaë to a northern king is a Morrisian addition, and only Caxton and Lemprière mention that Acrisius considers murder an option. Compare also Morris’s: “He lacked the heart his flesh and blood to slay” with Caxton’s: “[Nature] maad him to condescend to pyte [pity] . . . and to late [prevent] the shedding of her blood that was come of his own blood” (Recuyell, 105).

The Doom of King Acrisius

NOW thither oft would maiden Danaë stray,
And watch its strange walls growing day by day,
Because, poor soul! she knew not anything
Of these forebodings of the fearful King,
Nor how he meted out for her this doom,
Therein to dwell as in a living tomb.
But on a day, she, coming there alone,
Found it all finished and the workmen gone,
And no one nigh, so through the open door
She entered, and went up from floor to floor,
And through its chambers wandered without dread;
And, entering one, she found therein a bed,
Dight’ daintily, as though to serve a queen;
And all the walls adorned with hangings green,⁵
Tables and benches in good order set,
And all things new, by no one used as yet.
WITH that she murmured: When again I see
My father, will I bid him tell to me
Who shall live here and die here, for, no doubt,
Whoever enter here shall ne’er go out:
Therefore the walls are made so high and great,
Therefore the bolts are measureless of weight,
The windows small, barred, turned unto the sea,
That none from land may tell who here may be.
No doubt some man the King my father fears
Above all other, here shall pass his years.
Alas, poor soul! scarce shall he see the sun,
Or care to know when the hot day is done,
Or ever see sweet flowers again, or grass,
Or take much note of how the seasons pass.
Truly we folk who dwell in rest and ease
But lightly think of such abodes as these;
And I, who live wrapped round about with bliss,

⁴dight: prepared, made ready for use.
⁵green: color associated with fertility and renewal, indicating some hope in Danaë’s plight.
⁶who shall . . . die: Caxton’s Danaë is also unaware of her fate, but Morris adds the belief that someone else is to be imprisoned there.
Shall go from hence and soon forget all this:
For in my garden many a sweet flower blooms,
Wide open are the doors of all my rooms,
And lightly folk come in and lightly go;
And I have known as yet but childish woe.
Therewith she turned about to leave the place;
But as unto the door she set her face,
A bitter wailing from outside she heard,
And somewhat therewithal she waxed afeard,
And stopped awhile; yet listening, she but thought:
This is the man who to his doom is brought
By weeping friends, who come to see the last
Of that dear face they know shall soon be past
From them for ever. Then she 'gan to go
Adown the brazen stairs with footsteps slow.
BUT quick the shrieks and wailing drew anear,
Till in her ears it sounded sharp and clear,
And then she said: Alas! and must I see
These weeping faces drawn with agony?
Would I had not come here to-day! Withal
She started, as upon her ear did fall
The sound of shutting of the outer door,
And people coming up from floor to floor;
And paler then she grew, but moved to meet
The woeful sounds and slow-ascending feet,
Shrinking with pity for that wretched one
Whose life of joy upon that day was done.

THUS down the stairs with saddened heart she passed,
And to a lower chamber came at last:
But as she went beneath the archway wide
The door was opened from the other side,
And in poured many maidens, whom she knew
For her own fair companions, leal and true;
And after them two men-at-arms there came,
With knitted brows and eyes downcast for shame.
But when those damsels saw her standing there,
Anew they wept, and tore their unbound hair;
But midst their wailing, still no word they said,

Until she spoke, oppressed with sickening dread:
O TELL me what has happened to me then!
For is my father slain of outland men?
Or have the gods sent death upon the land?
Or is it mine own death that they command?
Alas, alas! but slay me quick, I pray,
Nor let me linger on from day to day,
Madden'd with fear like this, that sickens me,
And makes me seem the half-dead thing ye see.
THEN, like a man constrained, a soldier said
These cruel words unto the wretched maid:
Lady, lose hope and fear now once for all;
Here must thou dwell betwixt brass wall and wall
Until the gods send gentle death to thee;
And these as erst thine handmaidens shall be.
And if thou askest why the thing is so,
Thus the King wills it, for a while ago
An oracle foretold that thou shouldst live
To have a son, who bitter death should give
Unto thy father; so, to save this shame
From falling on the glorious Argive name,
He deemed it well that thou shouldst live indeed,
But yet apart from man thy life should lead.
So in this place thy days must pass away,
And we who are thy guards, from day to day
Will bring thee everything that thou mayst need.
But pardon us, constrained to do this deed
By the King's will, and oaths that we have sworn
Ere to this life of sorrow thou wert born.
THEREWITH they turned and went, and soon the sound
Of shutting doors smote like a deadly wound
Into her heart; and yet no word she spoke,
But fell as one beneath a deadly stroke.
HEN they who there her fellows were to be
Bore up her body, groaning heavily,
Unto the chamber whither fate had led
145
Her feet that morn; and there upon the bed
They laid her body, and then sat around,
With heavy heads and hair that
swept the ground,
To weep the passing of those happy days
When many an one their happy lot would praise.
But now and then, when bitterly would sting
The loss of some nigh-reached and longed-for thing,
Into a wail their weeping would arise.
Then in a while did Danaë ope her eyes,
And to her aching forehead raised her hand;
But when she saw that wan, dishevelled band,
She soon remembered this was no ill dream,
But that all things were e'en as they did seem;
Then she arose, but soon upon the bed
Sank down again, and hid her troubled head,
And moaned and moaned, and when a damsel came
And touched her hand, and called her by her name,
She knew her not, but turned her head away:
Nor did she know when dark night followed day.
SO passed by many a day in mourning sore,
And weariness oppressed her evermore
In that unhappy prison-house of brass;
And yet a little the first sting did pass
That smote her, and she ate and drank and slept,
And fair and bright her body Venus kept,
160
Yea, such a grace the sea-born goddess' fair
Did to her, that the ripples of her hair
Grew brighter, and the colour in her face
And lovely lips waned not in that sad place;
And daily grew her limbs in goodlihead;
Till, as she lay upon the golden bed
You would have thought the Queen herself had come

To meet some love far from her golden home.4
AND once it happe at the first hour of day
In golden morn upon her bed she lay,
Newly awakened to her daily woe,
And heard the rough sea beat the rocks below,
The wheeling sea-gull5 screaming on the wing,
Sea-swallows6 swift, and many a happy thing,
Till bitterly the tears ran down her cheek,
And stretching forth her arms and fingers weak,
'Twixt moans these piteous helpless words she said:
O Queen Diana, make me now thy maid,11
And take me from this place and set me down
By the boar-haunted hills, that oak-woods crown,
Amid thy crowd of trim-girt maidens fair.
And shall I not be safe from men-folk there,
Thou cruel King? when she is guarding me,
The mighty maid from whom the shepherds flee,
When in the gathering dusk 'twixt day and night
The dead leaves tell them of her footsteps light,
Because they mind how dear Actaeon bought12
The lovely sight for which he never sought,
Diana naked in the water wan.
Yea, what fear should I have of any man
When through the woods I, wandering merrily,

8her golden home: Venus's "golden" home was the island of Cyprus, off the Syrian coast. The epithet "golden" was often associated with Venus, and Ovid claimed that golden trees grew on Cyprus (Metamorphoses X, 647-48).
9sea-gull: tern (sterna and related genera), a bird smaller and slendrer than a typical gull, often with forked tail, black cap and white body.
10sea-swallows: sea gulls, as above.
11make me now thy maid ... : Only in Morris's version of this tale does Danaë (like many heroines in The Earthly Paradise) pray to the virgin-goddess Diana. Unmarried men in The Earthly Paradise tend to prefer Venus, but most of the work's women prefer the virgin-goddess Diana.
12bow dear Actaeon bought: When the unfortunate Actaeon stumbled upon the stream in which Diana and her attendants bathed, the goddess turned him into a stag, and he was hunted down and killed by his own dogs.

7sea-born goddess: Venus.
With girt-up gown, sharp sword upon the thigh,
Full quiver on the back, stout bow in hand,
Should tread with firm feet many a grassy land,
And grow strong-limbed in following up the deer,
And meet the lions' eyes with little fear?
Alas! no doubt she hears not; many a maid
She has already, of no beast afraid,
Crisp-haired, with arms made meet for archery,
Whose limbs unclad no man shall ever see;
Though the birds see them, and the seeding grass
Harsh and unloving over them may pass,
When carelessly through rough and smooth they run,
And bough and briar catches many an one.
ALAS! why on these free maids is my thought,
When to such misery my life is brought?
I, who so long a happy maid have been,
The daughter of a great King and a Queen;
And why these fresh things do I think upon,
Who now shall see but little of the sun?
HERE every day shall have the same sad tale,
My weary damsels with their faces pale,
The dashing of the sea on this black rock;
The piping wind through cranny and through lock;\[13\]
The sea-bird's cry, like mine grown hoarse and shrill,
The far-off sound of horn upon the hill,
The merry tune about the shepherd's home,
And all the things wheroet I ne'er may come.
O YE who rule below;\[14\] I pray this boon,
I may not live here long, but perish soon,
Forgotten, but at peace, and feeling nought;
For even now it comes across my thought
That here my wretched body dwells alone,
And that my soul with all my hope is gone.
FATHER, thy blood upon thine own head be
If any solace Venus send to me
Within this wretched place which thou hast made,

---

13lock: a barrier or enclosure.
14Ye who rule below: gods of the underworld.

Of thine own flesh and blood too much afraid.

\[205\]
RULY Diana heard not, for that tide
Upon the green grass by a river side,
Wherein she had just bathed her body sweet,
She stopped to tie the sandals to her feet,
Her linen gown upon the herbage lay,
And round her was there standing many a may\[15\].

Making her ready for the morning chase.

BUT so it happpened that Venus by the place
Was passing, just arisen from the sea,
And heard the maid complaining bitterly,
So to the window-bars she drew anigh,
And thence unseen, she saw the maiden lie,
As on the grass herself she might have lain
When in the thicket lay Adonis'\[16\]slain;
For power and joy she smiled thereat, and thought:
She shall not suffer all this pain for nought.
And slowly for Olympus sailed away,
And thither came at hottest of the day.
THEN through the heavenly courts she went, and when
She found the father both of gods and men,\[17\]
She smiled upon him, and said: Knowest thou
What deeds are wrought by men in Argos now?
Wherein a brazen tower well builded is,
That hides a maid away from all my bliss;
Since thereby thinks Acrisius to forego
This doom that has been fated long ago,
That by his daughter's son he shall be slain;
Wherefore he puts the damsel to this pain
To see no man, and thinks to 'scape his doom
If she but live and die with barren womb;
And great dishonour is it unto me
That such a maiden lives so wretchedly;
And great dishonour is it to us all
That ill upon a guiltless head should fall
To save a King from what we have decreed.

15may: maiden
16Adonis: Venus's mortal lover, killed by a wild boar.
17the father both of gods and men: Homeric epithet for Zeus.
Now, therefore, tell me, shall his impious deed
Save him alive, while she that might have borne
Great kings and glorious heroes lives forlorn
Of love's delight, in solitude and woe?
THEN said the Thunderer: Daughter, no-wise so
Shall this be in the end; heed what shall fall,
And let none think that any brazen wall
Can let the Gods from doing what shall be.
NOW therewithal went Venus to the sea,
Glad of her father's words, and, as she went,
Unseen the gladness of the spring she sent
Across the happy lands o'er which she moved,
Until all men felt joyous and beloved.
BUT while to Paphos²⁸ carelessly she fared,
All day upon the tower the hot sun glared,
And Danaë within that narrow space
Went to and fro, and sometimes hid her face
Between her hands, moaning in her despair,
Or sometimes tore the fillets²⁹ from her hair,
And sometimes would begin a piteous tale
Unto her maids, and in the midst would fail
For sobs and tears; but mostly would she sit
Over against the window, watching it,
And feel the light wind blowing from the sea
Against her face, with hands laid listlessly
Together in her lap. So passed the day,
And to their sleep her damsels went away.
And through the dead of night she slept awhile,
But when the dawn came, woke up with a smile,
As though she had forgotten all her pain,
But soon the heavy burden felt again,
And lay a wretch unhappy, till the sun
Drew nigh the sea's lip, and the night was done.
IN that fresh morn was no one stirring yet,
And many a man his troubles did forget
Buried in sleep, but nothing she forgot.

She raised herself and up in bed she sat,
And towards the window turned round wearily
To watch the changing colours of the sky;
And many a time she sighed, and seemed as though
She would have told the story of her woe
To whatsoever god near by might be
Betwixt the grey sky and the cold grey sea;
But to her lips no sound at all would rise,
Except those oft-repeated heavy sighs.
AND yet, indeed, within a little while
Her face grew calm, the shadow of a smile
Stole o'er her parted lips and sweet grey eyes,
And slowly from the bed did she arise,
And towards the window drew, and yet did seem,
Although her eyes were open, still to dream.
There on the sill she laid her slender hand,
And looking seaward, pensive did she stand,
And seemed as though she waited for the sun
To bring her news that evil days were done;
At last he came and cast his golden road
Over the green sea toward that lone abode,
And into Danaë's face his glory came
And lit her softly waving hair like flame.
But in his light she held out both her hands,
As though he brought her from some far-off lands
Healing for all her great distress and woe.
BUT yellower now the sunbeams seemed to grow,
Not whiter as their wont is, and she heard
A tinkling sound that made her, half afeard,
Draw back a little from the fresh green sea;
Then to a clang the noise rose suddenly,
And gently was she smitten on the breast,²⁰
And some bright thing within her palm did rest,
And trickled down her shoulder and her side,
And on her limbs a little did abide,

²⁸Paphos: town in Cyprus, legendary birthplace of Venus and the center of her worship.
²⁹fillets: ribbons or hair bands.
²⁰And gently was she smitten on the breast . . . : Morris here conflates classical stories, in which Jove rapes Danaë in a shower of golden rain, with Caxton's scene in which a gold-robed prince woos Danaë after showering her jailors with bribes.
Or lay upon her feet a little while.
THEN in her face increased the doubtful smile,
While o'er her eyes a drowsy film there came,
And in her cheeks a flush as if of shame,
And, looking round about, could she behold
The chamber scattered o'er with shining gold,
That grew, till ankle-deep she stood in it.
Then through her limbs a tremor did there flit
As through white water runs the summer wind,
And many a wild hope came into her mind;
But her knees bent, and soft she sank down there,
And on the gold was spread her golden hair,
And like an ivory image still she lay,
Until the night again had hidden day.

UT when again she lifted up her head,
She found herself laid soft within her bed,
While midst of the room the taper shone,
And all her damselfs from the place were gone,
And by her head a gold-robed man there stood,
At sight of whom the damsel's shamefast blood
Made all her face red to the golden hair,
And quick she covered up her bosom fair.

THEN in a great voice said he: Danae,
Sweet child, be glad, and have no fear of me,
And have no shame, nor hide from thy new love
The breast that on this day has pillow'd Jove.
Come now, come from that balmy nest of thine,
And stand with me beneath the taper's shine
That I may see thy beauty once again;
Then never shalt thou be in any pain,
But if thou liftest up thy face to Jove
I shall be kind to my sweet simple love;
I shall bethink me of thy body sweet,
From golden head to fair and dainty feet.
THEN, trembling sore, from out the bed she came
And hid away her face for dread and shame,
But soon she trembled more for very love,
To feel the loving hands of mighty Jove
Draw down her hands, and kisses on the head

And tender bosom, as again he said:
Now must I go; and sweet love, Danae,
Fear nothing more that man can do to thee,
For soon shall come an ending to thy woe,
And thou shalt have a son whose name shall grow
Still greater, till the mountains melt away
And men no more can tell the night from day.
Then forth be springing o'er the sea did fly,
And loud it thundered from a cloudless sky.

O when her damselfs came to her next morn,
And thought to see her laid forlorn
Upon the bed, and looking out to sea
Moaning full oft, and sighing heavily,
They found her singing o'er a web of silk
Wherethrough the even warp as white as milk
Quick flew the shuttle from her arm of snow,
And somewhat from her girded gown did show
On the black treadsles both her rosy feet,
Moving a little as the tender wheat
Moves in the June when Zephyr blows on it,
So, like a goddess weaving did she sit.
But when she saw her maidens wondering stand
She ceased her song and spake and stayed her hand:
If now ye see me merry of my mood
Be nought amazed, for e'en as die the good,
So die ill days; and now my heart is light,
For hearken; a fair dream I had last night,
That in his claws an eagle lifted me
And bore me to a land across the sea:
Wherefore I think that here I shall not die,
But live to feel dew falling from the sky,
And set my feet deep in the meadow grass
And underneath the scented pine-trees pass,
Or in the garden feel the western breeze,
The herald of the rain, sweep through the trees,

212 Zephyr: god of the west wind.
22a goddess weaving: Danae is here compared to Athena, goddess of arts and crafts and inventress of weaving (cf. 1057).
23a fair dream I had...: Morris adds Danae's dream.
Or in the hottest of the summer day
Betwixt green banks within the mill-stream play.
For either shall my father soon relent,
Or for my sake some marvel shall be sent,
And either way these doors shall open wide;
And then doubt not to see me soon a bride
With some king's amorous son before my feet.
Ahi! verily my life shall then be sweet;
Before these days I knew not life or death,
With little hope or fear I drew my breath,
But now when all this sorrow is o'erpast,
Then shall I feel how sweet life is at last,
And learn how dear is peace from all these fears.
So no more will I waste my life in tears,
But pass the time as swiftly as may be,
Until ye step out on the turf with me.
THEN glad they were, when such-like words they heard,
And yet some doubted and were sore afeard
That she had grown light-headed with her woe;
Dreading the time might come when she would throw
Her body on the ground and perish there,
Slain by her own hand mighty with despair.
Nathless the days more merrily went by,
And from that prison men heard minstrelsy,
When nought but mourning fisher-folk afeard
Who passed that way, in other times had heard.

ET truly Danaë said that all things pass
And are forgotten; in that house of brass
Forgotten was the stunning bitter pain
Wherewith she entered it, and yet again
In no long time, hope was forgotten too,
When wringing torments moaning
from her drew,
And to and fro the pale scared damsels went,
And those her guards unto Acrisius sent.
But ere the messenger returned again
She had been eased of half her bitterest pain.

24: Natheless: nevertheless, notwithstanding.

And on her breast a fair man-child was laid;
Then round the messenger her maids afraid
Drew weeping; but he charged them earnestly,
Ever to watch her in that chamber high,
Lest any man should steal the babe away,
And so to bide until there came a day
When on her feet she might arise and go,
Whereof by messengers the King must know;
So, threatening torments unendurable,
If any harm through treachery befell,
He left them, and no more to them he told,
But in his face the sooth they might behold.
NOW, therefore, when some wretched days were past,
And trembling by the bed she stood at last,
She heard the opening of the outer door,
And footsteps came again from floor to floor,
And soon with all-armed men her chamber shone,
Who with few words now let her forth alone
Adown the stairs from out the brazen place;
And on her hot hands, and her tear-stained face,
Half-fainting, the pine-scented air she felt,
And all about the salt sea savour smelt,
And in her ears the dashing of the sea
Rang ever; thus the God had set her free.\(^{24}\)
BUT by the shore further they led her still
To where the sea beat on a barren hill,
And a long stage of timber met the sea,
At end whereof was tossing fearfully
A little boat that had no oars or sail,
Or aught that could the mariner avail.
Thither with her their steps the soldiers bent,
And as along the narrow way they went
The salt waves leapt aloft to kiss her feet
And in the wind streamed out her tresses sweet;
But little heed she took of feet or head,

25: thus the God had set her free: possibly an implied criticism of Jupiter's duplicity, one of the poem's many instances of divine disregard of human pain. On the other hand, the god-rapist does later bring Danaë safely to land in Seriphos in l. 533 below.
For nought she doubted she to death was led,
But ever did she hold against her breast
The little babe, and spoke not for the rest;
No, not when in the boat they bade her go,
And 'twixt its bulwarks thin she lay alow,
Nor when adrift they set her presently
And all about was but the angry sea.
NO word she said until the sun was down,
And she beheld the moon that on no town,
On no fair homestead, no green pasture shone,
But lit up the unwearied sea alone;
No word she said till she was far from shore
And on her breast the babe was wailing sore;
And then she lifted up her face to Jove,
And said: O thou who once didst call me love,
Hast thou forgotten those fair words of thine,
When underneath the taper's glimmering shine
Thou bad'st me stand that thou might'st look on me,
And love thou call'dst me, and sweet Danaë?
Now on thy promised help to-day I call,
For on what day can greater woe befall
Than this wherein to-night my body is,
And brought thereto, O King, by thy sweet kiss?
BUT neither did she pray the God in vain;
For straight he set himself to end her pain,
And while he cast on her a gentle sleep,
The winds within their houses did he keep,
Except the west, which soft on her did blow,
That swiftly through the sea the boat might go.

AR out to sea a certain isle doth lie
Men call Seriphos; a craggy, steep, and high:
It rises up on every side but one,
And mariners its ill-famed headlands shun;
But toward the south the meads slope soft adown,
Until they meet the yellow sands and brown.

26Seriphos: a small barren island in the Aegean Sea, off the coast of Argolis, where Roman upper-class rebels, criminals, and political dissidents were sometimes exiled.

27shallow: sloop, a boat used in shallow waters.
28the brother of the King: In Lempière, Danaë's rescuer Dictys is a fisherman as well as the king's brother.
Spreading abroad the small hands helplessly
That on some day should still the battle's cry.
And furthermore he saw where by her side
Yet lay her ferry o'er the waters wide:
Then, though he knew not whence she might have come,
He doubted not the firm land was her home.
BUT when he came anigh, beholding him,
She fell a-trembling in her every limb,
And kneeling to him held the young babe out,
And said: O sir, if, as I have no doubt,
In this strange land thou art a king and lord,
Speak unto me some comfortable word.
BORN of a king who rules a lovely land,
I in my house that by the sea doth stand,
With all my girls, made merry on a day:
Now some of them upon the sands did play,
Dancing unto their fellows' minstrelsy;
And some it pleased upon sweet flowers to lie,
Ripe fruits around, and thence to look on them;
And some were fain to lift their kirtles" hem,
And through the shallows chase the fishes fleet;
But in this shallop would I have my seat
Alone, and holding this my little son,  
And knowing not that my good days were done.
Now how it chanced, in sooth I cannot say,
But yet I think that one there was that day,
Who for some hidden cause did hate me sore,
Who cut the cord that bound me to the shore,
And soon amidst my helpless shrieks the boat,
Oarless and sailless, out to sea did float.
But now that many a danger has been passed,
The gods have sent: me to your land at last,
Alive, indeed, but such-like as you see,
Cold and drenched through with washing of the sea,
Half-clad, and kneeling on an unknown land,
And for a morsel holding out my hand.

29kirtles: gowns.

THEN said he: Lady, fear not any more,
For thou art come unto no savage shore,
But here shall be a queen as erst at home:
And if thou askst whereto thou art come,
This is the isle Seriphus; and for me,
My name is Dictys, and right royally
My brother lives, the king of all the isle.
Him shalt thou see within a little while,
And doubtless he will give thee everything
That 'longs unto the daughter of a king.
Meanwhile I bid thee in mine house to rest,
And there thy wearied body shall be dressed
In seemly raiment by my women slaves,
And thou shalt wash thee from the bitter waves,
And eat and drink, and sleep full easily,
And on the morrow shalt thou come with me
And take King Polydeuces by the hand,
Who in good peace rules o'er this quiet land.
THEN on his horse he set the Queen, while he
Walked by the side thereof right soberly;
And half asleep, as slow they went along,
She laid her hand upon the war-horse strong,
While Dictys by her side Jove's offspring bore,
And thus they left the sea-seat yellow shore.
And as one dreaming to the house she came,
Where in the sun the brazen doors did flame;
And there she ate and drank as in a dream;
Dreamlike to her the scented bath did seem
After the icy sprinkling of the waves,
And like a dream the fair, slim women-slaves,
Who laid her in the soft bed, where she slept
Dreamless, until the horned white moon had stept
Over the fresh pine-scented hills again.
BUT when the sun next day drave forth his wain,
The damsel, clad in queen-like gold array,
With Dictys to the palace took her way;
And there by minstrels dully were they met,
Who brought them to the great hall, where was set
The King upon a royal throne of gold:
Black-bearded was he, thirty summers old,
Comely and strong, and seemed a king indeed;
Who, when he saw the minstrels thither lead
Fair Danaë, rose up to her, and said:
Oh, welcome, lady! be no more afraid
That thou shalt lose thy state and dignity;
Yea, since a gem the gods have sent to me,
With plates of silver will I overlay
The casket that hath brought it on the way,
And set it in King Neptune's house to stand
Until the sea shall wash away the land.\(^{30}\)
And for thyself a fair house shalt thou have
With all things needful, and right many a slave,
Both men and women; fair shall all things be
That thou mayst dwell here in felicity,
And that no care may wrinkle thy smooth brow.
And for the child, when he is old enow
The priests of Pallas\(^ {31}\) shall of him have care,
And thou shalt dwell hard by her temple fair;
But on this good day in mine hall abide,
And do me grace in sitting by my side.
THEN mounted she the dais and sat, and then
Was she beheld of all the island-men,
Who praised her much, and praised the sturdy child,
Who at their shouting made as if he smiled.
So passed the feast, and when the day had end
Unto her house did wearied Danaë wend,
That stood amid Minerva's olive-trees\(^ {32}\)
Hidden away from moaning of the seas.

AND there began fair Danaë's life again,
And quite forgotten was her ancient pain,
And peacefully did day succeed to day,
While fairer grew the well-loved child alway,
And strong and wise beyond his scanty years,
And in the island all his little peers
Held him for lord, whatso might be their worth,
And Perseus is his name from this time forth.

O, eighteen summers now have come and gone
Since on the beach fair Danaë stood alone
Holding her little son, nor yet was she
Less fair than when the hoarse unwilling sea
Moaned loud that Neptune drew him from her feet,
And the wind sighed upon her bosom sweet.
For in that long-past half-forgotten time,\(^ {33}\)
While yet the world was young, and the sweet clime,
Golden and mild, no bitter storm-clouds bred,
Light lay the years upon the untroubled head,
And longer men lived then by many a year
Than in these days, when every week is dear.
NOW on a day was held a royal feast,
Whereon there should be slain full many a beast
Unto Minerva; thereto the King came,
And in his heart love lit a greedy flame
At sight of Danaë's arms stretched out in prayer
Unto the goddess, and her yellow hair,
Wreathed round with olive wreaths, that hung adown
Over the soft folds of her linen gown;
And when at last he took her by the hand
Speechless by her did Polydectes stand,
So was he with desire bewildered
At sight of all that wondrous white and red,

\(^{30}\)wash away the land: Polydectes promises to plate Danaë's boat with silver and set it as a memorial in the temple of Neptune.
\(^{31}\)Pallas: Athena. Lemperière is the only source in which the priests, rather than Dictys, raise Perseus to maturity. Morris may have chosen this version to help explain Athena's special care for Perseus.
\(^{32}\)Minerva's olive trees: The olive was Athena's sacred tree, allegedly created by her for the Athenians.

\(^{33}\)long-past half-forgotten time: According to widespread belief, the long-lost golden age was a period in which suffering and old age were unknown. The world and its inhabitants have since become progressively more degenerate in successive "ages" of "baser" metal.
That peaceful face, wherein all past distress
Had melted into perfect loveliness.
SO when that night he lay upon his bed,
Full many a thought he turned within his head
Of how he best might unto that attain,
Whose lack now filled him with such burning pain.
And at the first it seemed a little thing
For him who was a rich man and a king,
Either by gifts to win her, or to send
And fetch her thither, and perforce to end
Her widowhood; but then there came the thought:
By force or gifts hither she might be brought,
And here might I get that for which I long;
Yet has she here a son both brave and strong,
Nor will he think it much to end my days
If he may get thereby the people’s praise,
E’en if therewith he shortly needs must die;
Ah, verily, a purblind fool was I,
That when I first beheld that matchless face
I had no eyes to see her heavenly grace;
Then with few words might I have held her here
And kept her for mine own with little fear;
But now I have no will the lad to slay,
For he would be revenged some evil day,
Who now Jove’s offspring do I think to be,
So dowered is he with might and majesty.
Yet could I find perchance some fair pretence
Whereby with honour I might send him hence,
Nor have the youngling’s blood upon my head,
Then might he be well-nigh as good as dead.
So pondering on his bed long time he lay,
Until the night began to mix with day,
And then he smiled and so to sleep turned round,
As though at last some sure way he had found.

34purblind: (here), imperceptive, undiscerning.
35dowered: endowed or furnished with any talent, power, or other gift.
THEN stretching out his arm did he take up
From off the board a jewelled golden cup,
And said: O Perseus, come and sit by me,
And from my hand take this, that thou dost see,
And be my friend. Then Perseus drew a near,
And took the cup and said: This shall be dear
Unto mine eyes while on the earth I live;
And yet a gift I in my turn may give,
When to this land comes bitter war, or when
Some enemy thou hast among great men;
Yea, sire, among these knights and lords I swear
To do whatso thou biddst me without fear.
THEN the King smiled and said: Yea, verily,
Then wilt thou give a noble gift to me,
Nor yet, forsooth, too early by a day;
To-morrow mayst thou be upon thy way.
Far in the western sea a land there is
Desert and vast, and emptied of all bliss,
Where dwell the Gorgons* wretchedly now;
Two of them die not, one above her brow
And wretched head bears serpents, for the shame
That on an ill day fell upon her name,
When in Minerva's shrine great sin was wrought,
For thither by the Sea-god she was brought,
And in the maiden's house in love they mixed;
Who wrathful, in her once fair tresses fixed
That snaky brood, and shut her evermore.

36Gorgons: Stheno, Euryale, and Medusa, the daughters of Phorcys, a sea-deity, and her sister, Ceto. Stheno and Euryale were immortal, but Medusa was not. In Lemprière and Apollodorus they are all monsters, with fangs, bronze hands, and golden wings, but Ovid's Medusa was once a young woman with especially beautiful hair whom Neptune raped in Athena's temple. Unable to punish Neptune, Athena instead punished the victim. She changed Medusa's long tresses into snakes, and made her so hideous that she now, like her sisters, turned all who saw her into stone. Morris substitutes a seduction for rape, and permits Medusa to keep her human characteristics.

Within a land west of the Lybian shore.*
Now if a king could gain this snaky head
Full well for war were he apparelled,
Because no man may look thereon and live.*
A great gift, therefore, Perseus, wouldst thou give
If thou shouldst bring this wonder unto me;
And for the place, far in the western sea
It lies, I say, but nothing more I know,
Therefore I bid thee, to some wise man go
Who has been used this many a day to pore
O'er ancient books of long-forgotten lore.
THUS spoke the King, knowing the while full well
None but a god of that far land could tell.
But Perseus answered: O my Lord, the King,
Thou settest me to win a dreadful thing,
Yet for thy bounty this gift will I give
Unto thine hands, if I should chance to live.
WITH that he turned, and silent, full of thought,
From out the hall he passed not noting aught,
And toward his home he went but soberly,
And thence went forth an ancient man to see
He hoped might tell him that he wished to know,
And to what land it were the best to go.
But when he told the elder all the tale,
He shook his head, and said: Nought will avail
My lore for this, nor dwells the man on earth
Whose wisdom for this thing will be of worth;
Yea, to this dreadful land no man shall win
Unless some god himself shall help therein;
Therefore, my son, I rede* thee stay at home,
For thou shalt have full many a chance to roam
Seeking for something that all men love well.

37west of the Lybian shore: Morris follows Hesiod as quoted in Lemprière. According to Ovid, the Gorgons live in inland Libya.
38Then the King smiled . . . : In Apollodorus and Lemprière, the proud Perseus himself recklessly suggests that he bring the Gorgon's head as a gift. In Morris's version, Polydectes is more villainous.
39rede: counsel or advise.
HEN forth again went Perseus soberly,
And walked along the border of the sea,
Upon the yellow sands where first he came
That time when he was deemed his mother's shame.

AND now was it the first hour of the night,
Therefore within the west a yellow light
Yet shone, though risen was the horned moon,
Whose lonely cold grey beams would quench it soon,
Though now her light was shining doubtfully
On the wet sands, for low down was the sea,
But rising, and the salt-sea wind blew strong
And drove the hurrying breakers swift along.
So there walked Perseus thinking many a thing
About those last words of the wily king,
And as he went at last he came upon
An ancient woman, who said: Fair, my son,
What dost thou wandering here in the cold night?
When in the King's hall glance from shade to light
The golden sandals of the dancing girls,
And in the gold cups set with gems and pearls
The wine shines fair that glads the heart of man;
What dost thou wandering 'neath the moonlight wan?
THIS have I done, said he, as one should swear
To make the vine bear bunches twice a year,
For I have sworn the Gorgon's head to bring
A worthy gift unto our island King,
When neither I, nor any man can tell
In what far land apart from men they dwell.
Some god alone can help me in my need;
And yet unless somehow I do the deed
An exile I must be from this fair land,
Nor with my peers shall I have heart to stand.
GRIM in the moonlight smiled the aged crone,
And said: If living there thou com'st, alone
Of all men yet, what thinkest thou to do?
Then verily thy journey shalt thou rue,

For whose looks upon that face meets death,
That in his sick heart freezes up his breath
Until he has the semblance of a stone.
BUT Perseus answered straightly to the crone:
O Mother, if the gods but give me grace
To come anigh that fair and dreadful face,
Well may they give me grace enough also
Their enemy and mine to lay alow.
NOW as he spake, the white moon risen high
Burst from a cloud, and shone out gloriously,
And down the sands her path of silver shone,
And lighted full upon that ancient crone;
And there a marvel Perseus saw indeed,
Because in face, in figure, and in weed,80
She wholly changed before his wondering eyes.
NOW tall and straight her figure did arise,
That erst seemed bent with weight of many a year,
And on her head a helmet shone out clear
For the rent clout7 that held the grizzled head:
With a fair breastplate was she furnished,
From whence a hauberk8 to her knees fell down;
And underneath, a perfumed linen gown,
O'erwrought with many-coloured Indian silk,
Fell to her sandall'd feet, as white as milk.
Grey-eyed she was, like amber shone her hair,
Aloft she held her right arm round and bare,
Whose hand upheld a spear-shaft nigh the steel.
UNWONTED trembling fear did Perseus feel
When he beheld before him Pallas stand,90

40 weed: clothing or apparel.
41 clout: a rag or piece of cloth.
42 hauberk: a tunic of flexible chain mail.
43 When he beheld before him Pallas stand: one of a number of mythological transformations of aged valetudinarians to radiant divinities. Morris creates this scene, reminiscent of many of Athena's appearances in the Odyssey, from a single line in which Apollodorus remarks that Athena helped Perseus.
The Classical Tale for April

And with bowed head he stood and out-stretched hand:
But she smiled on him softly, and she said:
Hold up again, O Perseus, thy fair head,
Because thou art indeed my father's son,
And in this quest that now thou goest upon
Thou shalt not fail: I swear it by my head,
And that black water all immortals dread.\(^44\)
Look now before thy feet, and thou shalt see
Four helpful things the high gods lend to thee,
Not willing thou should'st journey forth in vain:
Hermes himself, the many-eyed one's bane,\(^45\)
Gives these two-wingèd shoes, to carry thee\(^6\)
Tireless on high o'er every land and sea;
This cap is his whose chariot caught away\(^47\)
The maid of Enna from her gentle play;
And if thou art hard-pressed of any one
Set this on thee, and so be seen of none:
The halting god\(^8\) was craftsman of this blade;
No better shone, when, making heaven afraid,
The giants round our golden houses cried.\(^49\)

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\(^{44}\) *That black water all immortals dread*: the river Styx, boundary of the underworld. An oath sworn on its waters was binding even for the gods.

\(^{45}\) *the many-eyed one's bane*: Juno, Jupiter's jealous wife, captured Io, one of his lovers, and set a hundred-eyed watchman called Argus to guard her. Hermes, god of music and works as well as Jove's messenger, lulled all of Argus's eyes to sleep with his lyre, killed Argus, and rescued Io.

\(^{46}\) *to carry thee*: In Apollodorus, Perseus is forced to make another journey, to the Stygian nymphs, goddesses of the river Styx and owners of the magical objects.

\(^{47}\) *This whose . . . .*: The cap belongs to Pluto (Dis), god of the underworld and kidnapper of the maid of Enna, Cerê's daughter Persephone.

\(^{48}\) *the halting god*: Vulcan, armorer of the gods and patron of blacksmiths and metal-workers, has a lame leg.

\(^{49}\) *The giants round our golden houses cried*: When the Greek world was young, the "giant" sons of Ouranos (Sky) and Gaia (Earth) besieged Mount Olympus in an attempt to overthrow the gods. Athena in her role as war-goddess contributed to their defeat.

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**The Doom of King Acrisius**

For neither brass nor steel its edge can bide,
Or flinty rocks or gleaming adamant.\(^50\)
With these, indeed, but one thing dost thou want,
And that I give thee; little need'st thou reck?\(^51\)
Of those grey hopeless eyes,\(^52\) if round thy neck
Thou hang'st this shield, that, hanging once on mine,
In the grim giant's hopeless eyes did shine.
AND now be strong, and fly forth with good heart
Far northward, till thou seest the ice-walls part
The weary sea from snow-clad lands and wan,
Untrodden yet by any son of man.
There dwell the Gorgons' ancient sisters three
Men call the Graiae,\(^53\) who make shift to see
With one eye, which they pass from hand to hand.
Now make thyself unseen in this white land
And snatch the eye, while crooning songs they sit,
From hand to withered hand still passing it;
And let them buy it back by telling thee
How thou shalt find within the western sea
The unknown country where their sisters dwell.
Which thing unto thee I myself would tell,\(^54\)
But when with many a curse I set them there,

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\(^{50}\) *adamant*: a legendary stone so hard it could not be broken, sometimes identified with the diamond.

\(^{51}\) *reck*: heed, regard, care for.

\(^{52}\) *grey hopeless eyes*: Medusa's sad, still-beautiful eyes.

\(^{53}\) *the Graiae*: sisters of the Gorgons, generally believed three in number (though Ovid mentions only two), the Graiæ share a single sighted eye (and in some sources, a single tooth) between them. All writers agreed that they live at the northern edge of the world. Apollodoros says that they are "old from birth," but other mythologists describe them as fair-faced and swanlike, with white hair and (mostly) sightless eyes. Morris declined here to exploit their surreal appearance, but Edward Burne-Jones painted "The Grey Graiæ" as one of his Perseus murals in 1875.

\(^{54}\) *Which thing unto thee I myself would tell . . .*: This explanation of the goddess of wisdom's failure to supply needed information does not appear in Morris's sources.
I in my wrath by a great oath did swear
I would not name again the country grey
Wherein they dwell, with little light of day.
Good speed, O Perseus; make no tarrying,
But straightly set thyself to do this thing.
NOW as his ears yet rung with words like these,
And on the sand he sank upon his knees
Before the goddess, there he knelt alone
As in a dream; but still the white moon shone
Upon the sword, the shield, and cap and shoes,
Which half afraid was he at first to use,
Until the goddess gave him heart at last,
And his own gear in haste aside he cast,
And armed himself in that wild, lonely place:
Then turning round, northward he set his face,
And rose aloft and o'er the lands 'gan fly,
Betwixt the green earth and the windy sky.
YOUNG was the night when first he left the sands
Of small Seriphos, but right many lands
Before the moon was down his winged feet
Had borne him over, tireless, strong, and fleet.
Then in the starlight, black beneath him lay
The German forests, where the wild swine play,
Fearless of what Diana's maids may do,
Who ever have more will to wander through
The warm and grassy woods of Thessaly,
Or in Sicilian orange-gardens lie.
But ere the hot sun on his arms 'gan shine
He had passed o'er the Danube and the Rhine,
And heard the faint sound of the northern sea;
But ever northward flew untiringly,
Till Thule lay beneath his feet at last.
Then o'er its desert icy hills he passed,

And on beneath a feeble sun he flew,
Till, rising like a wall, the cliffs he knew
That Pallas told him of: the sun was high,
But on the bleak ice shone but wretchedly;
Pale blue the great mass was, and cold enow;
Grey tattered moss hung from its jagged brow,
No wind was there at all, though ever beat
The leaden tideless sea against its feet.
THEN lighted Perseus on that dreary land,
And when on the white plain his feet did stand
He saw no sign of either beast or man,
Except that near by rose a palace wan,
Built of some metal that he could not name.
Thither he went, and to a great door came
That stood wide open; so without a word
He entered in, and drew his deadly sword,
Though neither sword or man might one behold
More than folk see their death ere they grow old.
SO having entered, through a cloister grey
With cautious steps and slow took he his way,
At end whereof he found a mighty hall;
Where, bare of hangings, a white marble wall
And milk-white pillars held the roof aloft,
And nothing was therein of fair or soft;
And at one end, upon a daïs high,
There sat the crones that had the single eye,
Clad in blue sweeping cloak and snow-white gown;
While o'er their backs their straight white hair hung down
In long thin locks; dreadful their faces were,
Carved all about with wrinkles of despair;
And as they sat they crooned a dreary song,
Complaining that their lives should last so long
In that sad place that no one came anear,
In that wan place desert of hope and fear;
And singing, still they rocked their bodies bent,
And ever each to each the eye they sent.
AWHILE stood Perseus gazing on the three,  
Then sheathed his sword, and toward them warily  
He went, and from the last one snatched the eye,  
Who, feeling it gone from her, with a cry  
Sprung up and said: O sisters, he is here  
That we were warned so long ago to fear,  
And verily he has the eye of me.  
THEN those three, thinking they no more should see  
What feeble light the sun could show them there,  
And that of all joys now their life was bare,  
Began a-wailing and lamenting sore  
That they were worse than ever heretofore.  
THEN Perseus cried: Unseen am I indeed,  
But yet a mortal man, who have a need  
Your wisdom can make good, if so ye will;  
Now neither do I wish you any ill,  
Nor this your treasure will I keep from you,  
If ye will tell me what I needs must do  
To gain, upon the earth or under it,  
The dreary country where your sisters sit:  
Of whom, as wise men say, the one is fair  
As any goddess, but with snaky hair  
And body that shall perish on some day,  
While the two others ancient are, and grey  
As ye be, but shall see the whole world die.  
THEN said they: Rash man, give us back the eye  
Or rue this day, for wretched as we are,  
Beholding not fair peace or godlike war,  
Or any of the deeds of men at all,  
Yet are we strong, and on thy head shall fall

56 *That we were warned so long ago to fear*: Morris's sources say nothing about such a prophecy. Morris assigned the Graiae more powers than did his sources, and he may therefore have inserted this detail to relativize their powers of prophecy.

57 *shall see the whole world die*: Medusa's sisters are immortal and will see the end of the world.

58 *what else, what else...*: Only Morris's Graiae offer bribes to protect their sisters, or show any concern for them at all.

59 *unholpen*: unhelped.

60 *The white-armed goddess of the loom*: Athena.
Upon this wretched fire-concealing shell.\(^{61}\)
Slave of the cruel gods! go, get ye hence,
And storing deeds for fruitless penitence,
Go east, as though in Scythia were thine home,
But when unto the wind-beat seas ye come
Stop short, and turn round to the south again
Until ye reach the western land of Spain;
Then o'er the straits ye soon shall come to be
Betwixt the ocean and the inner sea,
Thenceforth go westward even as thou mayst
Until ye find a dark land long laid waste,
Where green cliffs rise from out an inky sea,
But no green leaf may grow on bush or tree.
No sun makes day there, no moon lighteth night,
The long years there must pass in grey twilight;
There dwell our sisters, walking dismally
Between the dull-brown caverns and the sea.
TOOL in the hand of God! do there thy might!
Nor fall like us, nor strive for peace and right;
But give our own unto us and be gone,
And leave us to our misery all alone.
THEN straight he put the eye into the hand
Of her that spoke, and turned from that white land,
Leaving them singing their grim song again.
But flying forth he came at last to Spain,
And so unto the southern end of it,
And then with restless wings due west did flit.
For many a day across the sea he flew,
That lay beneath him clear enough and blue,
Until at last rose such a thick grey mist,
That of what lay beneath him nought he wist;
But still through this he flew a night and day
Hearkening the washing of the watery way,

Unseen: but when, at ending of the night,
The mist was gone and grey sea came in sight,
He thought that he had reached another world;
This way and that the leaden seas were hurled,
Moved by no wind, but by some unseen power;
Twilight it was, and still his feet dropped lower,
As through the thickening, dim hot air he passed,
Until he feared to reach the sea at last.
BUT even as his feet dragged in the sea,
He, praying to the goddess fervently,
Felt her good help, for soon he rose again
Three fathoms up, and flew with lessened pain;
And looking through the dimness could behold
The wretched land whereof the sisters told.\(^{62}\)
And soon could see how down the green cliffs fell
A yellow stream, that from some inland well
Arose, and through the land ran sluggishly,
Until it poured with dull splash in the sea
Like molten lead; and neger as he came
He saw great birds, whose kind he could not name,
That whirling noiselessly about did seem
To seek a prey within that leaden stream;
And drawing nigher yet, at last he saw
That many of them held, with beak or claw,
Great snakes they tore still flying through the air.
Then making for the cliff and lighting there
He saw, indeed, that tawny stream and dull
Of intertwining written snakes was full,
So, with a shudder, thence he turned away,
And through the untrodden land he took his way.
NOW cave-pierced rocks there rose up everywhere,
And gaunt old trees, of leaves and fruit all bare;
And midst this wretchedness a mighty hall,

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61. fire-concealing shell: The earth, whose fiery center is supplied by Morris. Greek popular opinion generally held that a dark, silent land of the dead underlay the earth.

62. The wretched land whereof the sisters told: The detailed description of the Gorgons' home is Morris's invention. Ovid merely mentions that it is a "sandy waste."
Whose great stones made a black and shining wall;
The doors were open, and thence came a cry
Of one in anguish wailing bitterly;
Then o'er its threshold passed the son of Jove,
Well shielded by the grey-eyed Maiden's\textsuperscript{63} love.
NOW there he saw two women bent and old,
Like to those three that north he did beheld;
There were they, sitting well-nigh motionless,
Their eyes grown stony with their long distress,
Staring at nought, and still no sound they made,
And on their knees their wrinkled hands were laid.
BUT a third woman paced about the hall,
And ever turned her head from wall to wall
And moaned aloud, and shrieked in her despair;
Because the golden tresses of her hair
Were moved by writhing snakes from side to side,
That in their writhing oftentimes would glide
On to her breast, or shuddering shoulders white;
Or, falling down, the hideous things would light
Upon her feet, and crawling thence would twine
Their slimy folds about her ankles fine.
But in a thin red garment was she clad,
And round her waist a jewelled band she had,
The gift of Neptune on the fatal day\textsuperscript{64}
When fate her happiness first put away.
SO there awhile unseen did Perseus stand,
With softening heart, and doubtful trembling hand
Laid on his sword-hilt, muttering: Would that she
Had never turned her woeful face to me.
But therewith Pallas smote him with this thought:
Does she desire to live, who has been brought
Into such utter woe and misery,
Wherefrom no god or man can set her free,

\textsuperscript{63}the grey-eyed Maiden: Athena.
\textsuperscript{64}the fatal day: the day when Neptune raped Medusa in Athena's temple.

Since Pallas' dreadful vow shall bind her fast,
Till earth and heaven are gone, and all is past?
And yet, would God the thing were at an end.
THEN with that word, he saw her stop and rend
The raiment from her tender breast and soft,
And with a great cry lift her arms aloft;
Then on her breast her head sank, as she said:
O ye, be merciful, and strike me dead!
How many an one cries unto you to live,
Which gift ye find no little thing to give,
O give it now to such, and unto me
That other gift from which all people flee!
O was it not enough to take away
The flowery meadows and the light of day?
Or not enough to take away from me
The once-loved faces that I used to see;
To take away sweet sounds and melodies,
The song of birds, the rustle of the trees;
To make the prattle of the children cease,
And wrap my soul in shadowy hollow peace,
Devoid of longing? Ah, no, not for me!
For those who die your friends this rest shall be;
For me no rest from shame and sore distress,
For me no moment of forgetfulness;
For me a soul that still might love and hate,
Shut in this fearfull land and desolate,
Changed by mine eyes to horror and to stone;
For me perpetual anguish all alone,
Midst many a tormenting misery,
Because I know not if I e'er shall die.
And yet, and yet, thee will I pray unto,
Thou dweller in the shifting halls of blue,\textsuperscript{65}
Fathoms beneath the treacherous bridge of lands.

\textsuperscript{65}dweller in the shifting halls of blue: Neptune, who dwells beneath the sea.
Call now to mind that day upon the sands,
Hard by the house of Pallas white and cold,
Where hidden in some wave thou didst behold
This body, fearless of the cold grey sea,
And dowered as yet with fresh virginity.
How many things thou promisedst me then!
Who among all the daughters of great men
Should be like me? what sweet and happy life!
What peace, if all the world should be at strife,
Thou promisedst me then! Lay all aside,
And give unto the great Earth-Shaker's bride
That which the wretch shut up in prison drear,
Deprived of all, yet ceases not to fear;
That which all men fear more than all distress,
The rest of death, and dull forgetfulness.\(^{67}\)

HER constant woeful prayer was heard at last,
For now behind her unseen Perseus passed,
And silently whirled the great sword around;
And when it fell, she fell upon the ground,
And felt no more of all her bitter pain.\(^{68}\)

But from their seats rose up with curses vain
The two immortals when they saw her fall
Headless upon the floor, and loud 'gan call
On those that came not, because far away
Their friends and kindred were upon that day.
Then to and fro about the hall they ran

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\(^{66}\) \textit{the great Earth-Shaker}: Homeric epithet for Neptune.

\(^{67}\) \textit{Does she desire to live...}: Morris's classical sources offer no counterpart of his portrayal of Medusa as a suffering human being.

\(^{68}\) \textit{And felt no more of all her bitter pain}: Classical authorities agree that the sight of Medusa's face literally petrified her victims, but Morris softens assorted aspects of her fate (cf. the notes to ll. 787 and 1160 above). In Morris's sources, Perseus kills Medusa in her sleep, and aims his sword by looking at her reflection in Athena's shell. Morris also omits the birth of the demigod Chrysaor and winged horse Pegasus from Medusa's severed neck.

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To find the slayer, were he god or man,
And when unseen from out the place he drew,
Upon the unhappy corpse, with wails, they threw
Their wretched and immortal bodies old:
But when the one the other did behold,
Alive and hideous there before her eyes,
Such anguish for the past time would arise
Within their hearts, that the lone hall would ring
With dreadful shrieks of many an impious thing.
Yet of their woe but little Perseus knew,
As with a stout heart south-east still he flew.

\(\text{O}W\) at his side a wallet Perseus bore,
With threads of yellow gold embroidered o'er;
Shuddering, therein he laid the fearful head,\(^{69}\)
Lest he unwitting yet might join the dead,
Or those he loved by sight of it be slain.

But strong Fate led him to the Libyan \(^{70}\) plain,
Where, at the ending of a sultry day,
A palace huge and fair beneath him lay,
Whose roofs with silver plates were covered o'er;
Then lighting down by its enormous door,
He heard unmeasured sounds of revelry,
And thought: A fair place this will be for me,
Who lack both food and drink, and rest this night.
So turning to the ruddy flood of light,
Up the huge steps he toiled unto the hall;
But even as his eager foot did fall
Upon the threshold, such a mocking shout

\(^{69}\) \textit{therein he laid the fearful head}: In Apollodorus, Perseus puts the head into a bag. In Ovid, he carries the head exposed, and the drops of blood become snakes where they fall.

\(^{70}\) \textit{Libyan}: nonstandard variant of "Lybian" (from Greek \(_{\text{\textregistered}}\) ), sometimes employed as a tag for all of Africa. In Ovid, Perseus becomes lost in a storm and flies around the world before he returns to Libya. Morris gives no explanation for Perseus's circuitous route through Syria to Seriphos.\(\text{\textregistered}\)
Rang in his ears as Etna's sendeth out
When, at the day's end, round the stilly cold
The Cyclops' some unmeasured banquet hold.
And monstrous men could he see sitting there,
Burnt by the sun, with length of straight black hair,
And taller far than men are wont to be; 1250
And at a gold-strewn dais could he see
A mighty King, a fearful man to face,
Brown-skinned and black-haired, of the giants' race,
Who seeing him, with thundering voice 'gan call:
O Stranger, come forthwith into the hall,
Atlas would see thee! Forth stood Perseus then,
And going 'twixt the rows of uncouth men
Seemed but a pigmy; but his heart was great,
And vain is might against the stroke of fate.
THEN the King cried: Who art thou, little one? 1260
Surely in thy land weak must be the sun
If there are bred such tender folk as thou:
May the gods grant such men are few enow? 71
Art thou a king's son? Loud he laughed within,
And shouts of laughter rang throughout the hall,
Like clattering thunder on a July night.
But Perseus quailed not. Little were my might,
He said, if helpless on the earth I were;
But to the equal gods my life is dear,
And certes victory over Jove's own son 1275
By earthly men shall not be lightly won.
SO spake he, moving inward from the door,

But louder laughed the black King than before,
And all his people shouted at his beck;
Therewith he cried: Break now this Prince's neck,
And take him forth and hang him up straightway
Before my door, that henceforth from this day
Pigmies and jesters may take better heed,
Lest at our hands they gain a liar's meed.
THEN started up two huge men from the board,
And Perseus, seeing them come, half drew his sword,
Looking this way and that; but in a while,
Upon his wallet with a deadly smile
He set his hand, and forth the head he drew,
Dead, white midst golden hair, where serpents blue
Yet dangled dead; and ere they stopped to take
His outstretched arms, before them he did shake
The dreadful thing: then stopped they suddenly,
Stone dead, without a wound or any cry.
THEN toward the King he held aloft the head,
And as he stiffened cried at him, and said:
O King! when such a gift I bring to thee,
Wilt thou be dumb and neither hear nor see?
Listen how sing thy men, and in thy hall
How swift the merry dancers' feet do fall!
FOR now these, thinking him some god to be,
Cried in their fear, and made great haste to flee,
Crowning about the great doors of the hall,
Until not one was left of great or small,
But the dead King, and those that there had died.
Lo, in such way Medusa's head was tried!
BUT when the living giant-folk were gone,
And with the dead men there he stood alone,
He turned him to the good that thereby lay,
And ate and drank with none to say him nay;
And on the floor at last he laid him down,

71 Etna: Mount Etna was believed to be the forge or smithy of Vulcan.
72 The Cyclops: uncouth one-eyed giants who were Vulcan's assistants.
73 A mighty King: Morris leaves the giant king unnamed, and offers no motivation for his hostility. Ovid identifies him as Atlas, guardian of the golden apples of the Hesperides, to be stolen according to prophecy by a son of Jupiter.
74 enow: enough.
Midst heaps of unknown tawny skins and brown.  
THERE all the night in dreamless sleep he lay,  
But rose again at the first streak of day,  
And looking round about rejoiced to see  
The uncouth image of his enemy,  
Silent for ever, with mouth agape  
E’en as he died; and thought: Who shall ’scape  
When I am angry, while this gift I have?  
How well my needy lovers I may save  
While this dread thing still hangeth by my side!  
THEN out he passed: a plain burnt up, and wide,  
He saw before him, bare of any trees,  
And much he longed for the green dashing seas,  
And merry winds of the sweet island shore,  
Fain of the gull’s cry, for the lion’s roar.  
YET, glad at heart, he lifted up his feet  
From the parched earth, and soon the air did beat,  
Going north-east, and flew forth all the day,  
And when the night fell, still was on the way;  
And many a sandy plain did he pass o’er,  
And many a dry much-trodden river shore,  
Where thick the thirsty beasts stood in the night.  
The stealthy leopard saw him with affright,  
As whining from the thicker it crept out;  
The lion drew back at his sudden shout  
From off the carcass of some slaughtered beast;  
The thin jackals waiting for the feast  
Stinted their hungry howls as he passed by;  
And black men sleeping, as he came anigh  
Dreamed ugly dreams, and reached their hands to seize  
The spear or sword that lay across their knees.  
O at the last the sea before him lay,  
But not for that did he make any stay,  
But flew on till the night began to wane,  
And the grey sea was blue and green again;  
Until the sunlight on his wings shone fair,  
And turned to red the gold locks of his hair.

Then in a little while he saw no land,  
But all was heaving sea on every hand,  
Driven this way and that way by the wind.  
STILL fast he flew, thinking some coast to find,  
And so, about the middle of the day,  
Far to the east a land before him lay,  
And when unto it he was come anigh  
He saw the sea beat on black cliffs and high,  
With green grass growing on the tops of them,  
Binding them round as gold a garment’s hem.  
THEN slowly alongside thereof he flew  
If haply by some sign the land he knew,  
Until a ness75 he reached, wherein there stood  
A tower new-built of mighty beams of wood;  
So nigh he came that, unseen, he could see  
Pale haggard faces peering anxiously  
From out its well-barred windows that looked forth  
Into a bay that lay upon the north;  
But inland over moveless waves of down  
Shone the white walls of some great royal town.  
NOW underneath the scarped cliffs of the bay  
From horn to horn a belt of sand there lay,  
Fast lessening as the flood-tide swallowed it;  
There all about did the sea-swallows flit,  
And from the black rocks yellow hawks flew down,  
And cormorants77 fished amidst the sea-weed brown,  
Or on the low rocks nigh unto the sea,  
While over all the fresh wind merrily  
Blew from the deep, and o’er the pale blue sky  
Thin clouds were stretched the way the wind went by;  
And forward did the mighty waters press  
As though they loved the green earth’s steadfastness.  
Nought slept, but everything was bright and fair

75ness: promontory, headland, or cape.  
77cormorants: long-necked shorebirds known for their appetites and diving abilities.
Beneath the bright sun and the noon-day air,
NOW hovering there, he seemed to hear a sound
Unlike the sea-bird's cry, and, looking round,
He saw a figure standing motionless
Beneath the cliff, midway 'twixt ness and ness,
And as the wind lulled, heard that cry again,
That sounded like the wail of one in pain;
Wondering thereat, and seeking marvels new,
He lighted down,78 and toward the place he drew,
And made invisible by Pallas' aid,
He came within the scarped cliff's purple shade,
And found a woman standing lonely there,
Naked, except for tresses of her hair
That o'er her white limbs by the breeze were wound,
And brazen chains her weary arms that bound
Unto the sea-beat overhanging rock,
As though her golden-crowned head to mock.
But nigh her feet upon the sand there lay
Rich raiment that had covered her that day,
Worthy to be the ransom of a king,
Unworthy round such loveliness to cling.
ALAS, alas! no bridal play this was;79
The tremors that throughout her limbs did pass,
Her restless eyes, the catching of her breath,
Were but the work of the cold hand of death
She waited for, midst untold miseries,
As, now with head cast back, and close-shut eyes,
She wailed aloud, and now all spent with woe
Starred out across the rising sea, as though
She deemed each minute brought the end anigh
For which in her despair she needs must cry.

HEN unseen Perseus stole anigh the maid,
And love upon his heart a soft hand laid,
And tender pity rent it for her pain;
Nor yet an eager cry could he refrain,
As now, transfixed by that piteous sight,
Grown like unto a god for pride and might,
Down on the sand the mystic cap he cast
And stood before her with flushed face at last,
And grey eyes glittering with his great desire
Beneath his hair, that like a harmless fire
Blown by the wind shone in her hopeless eyes.
BUT she, all rigid with her first surprise,
Ceasing her wailing as she heard his cry,
Stared at him, dumb with fear and misery,
Shrank closer yet unto the rocky place
And writhed her bound hands as to hide her face;
But sudden love his heart did so constrain,
With open mouth he strove to speak in vain,
And from his heart the hot tears 'gan to rise;
But she midst fear beheld his kind grey eyes,
And then, as hope came glimmering through her dread,
In a weak voice he scarce could hear, she said:
O Death! if thou hast risen from the sea,
Sent by the gods to end this misery,
I thank them that thou comest in this form,
Who rather thought to see a hideous worm
Come trailing up the sands from out the deep,
Or suddenly swing over from the steep
To lap me in his folds, and bone by bone
Crush all my body: come then, with no moan,
Will I make ready now to leave the light.
BUT yet: thy face is wonderful and bright;
Art thou a god? Ah, then be kind to me!
Is there no valley far off from the sea
Where I may live alone, afar from strife,
Nor anger any god with my poor life?
Or do the gods delight in misery,
And art thou come to mock me ere I die?
Alas, must they be pitiless, when they
Fear not the hopeless slayer of the day?
Speak, speak! what meanest thou by that sad smile?
O, if the gods could be but men awhile
And learn such fearful things unspeakable
As I have learned this morn, what man can tell
What golden age might wrap the world again?
Ah, dost thou love me, is my speech not vain?
Did not my beauty perish on this morn?
Dost thou not kiss me now for very scorn?
Alas, my shame, I cannot flee from thee!
Alas, my sin! no green-stemmed laurel tree
Shall mock thy grasp, no misty mountain stream
Shall wake thee shuddering from a lovely dream,
No helping god shall hear, but thou alone!
Help me, I faint! I see not! art thou gone?
Alas! thy lips were warm upon my brow,
What good deed will it be to leave me now!
Oh, yet I feel thy kind and tender hand
On my chained wrist, and thou wilt find some land
Where I may live a little, free from fear.
And yet, and yet, if thou hast sought me here
Being but a man, no manly thing it is;
Nor hope thou from henceforth to live in bliss,
If here thou wrongest me, who am but dead.
THEN as she might she hung down her head,
Her bosom heaved with sobs, and from her eyes
Long dried amidst those hopeless miseries
Unchecked the salt tears o'er her bosom ran

As love and shame their varying strife began.
BUT overwhelmed with pity, mad with love,
Stammering, nigh weeping spoke the son of Jove:
Alas, what land is this, where such as thou
Are thus tormented? look upon me now,
And cease thy fear! no evil man am I,
No cruel god to mock thy misery;
But the gods help me, and their unmoved will
Has sent me here to save thee from some ill,
I know not what; to give thee rest from this;
And unto me unutterable bliss,
If from a man thou takest not away
The gift thou gavest to a god to-day:
But I may be a very god to thee,
Because the gods are helpful unto me,
Nor would I fear them aught if thou wert nigh,
Since unto each it happeneth once to die.
Speak not, sweet maid, till I have loosed thine hands
From out the grasp of these unworthy bands.
SO straight, and ere her lips could frame a word,
From out its sheath he drew the gleaming sword,
And while she shut her dazzled eyes for fear
To see the glittering marvel draw anear,
Unto her side her weary arms fell freed;
Then must she shrink away, for now indeed,
With rest and hope and growing love, there came
Remembrance of her helplessness and shame.
Weeping she said: My fate is but to die;
Forget the wild words of my misery,
Take a poor maiden's thanks, and leave this place,
Nor for thy pity die before my face.
As verily thou wilt if thou stay'st here;
Because, however free thou art from fear,
What hopest thou against this beast to do,
My death, and thine unconquerable foe?
When all a kingdom's strength has had no hope
With this strange horror, God-endowed, to cope,
But deemed it good to give up one poor maid
Unto his wrath, who makes the world afraid.
NAY, said he, but thy fate shall be my fate,
And on these sands thy bane will I await,
Though I know nought of all his mightiness;
For scarcely yet a man, I none the less
Such things have done as make me now a name,
Nor can I live a loveless life of shame,
Or leave thee now, this day's most god-like gift,
Into some unknown mortal pain to drift.

HE, hurrying as he spoke, with trembling hands
Had lifted up her raiment from the sands,
And yet therewith she was not well arrayed,
Before she turned round, ghastly white, and said:

Look seaward and behold my death draw nigh!
Not thine, not thine; but kiss me ere I die;
Alas! how many things I had to tell,
For certainly I should have loved thee well.

HE came to her and kissed her as she sank
Into his arms, and from the horror shrank,
Clinging to him, scarce knowing he was there;
But through the drifting wonder of her hair,
Amidst his pity, he beheld the sea,
And saw a huge wave rising mightily
Above the smaller breakers of the shore,
Which in its green breast for a minute bore
A nameless horror, that it cast aland,
And left, a huge mass on the oozing sand,

82 God-endowed: According to Euripides, when Andromeda's mother, the Ethiopian Queen Cassiopœia, boasted that her beauty exceeded that of the Nereids, Poseidon sent a sea monster to ravage her kingdom. In ll. 1696–1709 Morris's Andromeda gives a more benign account of her mother's motives, who acts from maternal pride.

83 A nameless horror: Only Ovid among Morris's sources describes the monster, giving it scales, a fish-tail, shells that cling to its back, and fangs (Metamorphoses, IV, 710–723).

That scarcely seemed a living thing to be,
Until at last those twain it seemed to see,
And gathering up its strange limbs, towards them passed.
And therewithal a dismal trumpet-blast
Rang from the tower, and from the distant town
The winds in answer brought loud wails adown.
THEN Perseus gently put the oxid from him,
Who sank down shivering in her every limb,
Silent despite herself for fear and woe,
As down the beach he ran to meet the foe.

BUT he, beholding Jove's son drawing near,
A great black fold against him did uprear,
Maned with grey tufts of hair, as some old tree
Hung round with moss, in lands where vapours be; *4
From his bare skull his red eyes glowed like flame,
And from his open mouth a sound there came,
Strident and hideous, that still louder grew
As that rare sight of one in arms he knew:
But godlike, fearless, burning with desire,
The adamant jaws and lidless eyes of fire
Did Perseus mock, and lightly leapt aside
As forward did the torture-chamber glide
Of his huge head, and ere the beast could turn,
One moment bright did blue-edged Herpe *5 burn,
The next was quenched in the black flow of blood;
Then in confusâd folds the hero stood,
His bright face shadowed by the jaws of death,
His hair blown backward by the poisonous breath;
But all that passed, like lightning-lighted street
In the dark night, as the blue blade did meet
The wrinkled neck, and with no faltering stroke,
Like a god's hand the fell enchantment broke,  
And then again in place of crash and roar,  
He heard the shallow breakers on the shore,  
And o'er his head the sea-gull's plaintive cry,  
Careless as gods for who might live or die.  

HEN Perseus from the slimy loathsome coil  
Drew out his feet, and then with little toil  
Smote off the head, the terror of the lands,  
And, dragging it along, went up the sands,  
Shouting aloud for joy: Arise, arise,  
O thou whose name I know not! Ope thine eyes  
To see the gift, that I, first seen to-day,  
Am hastening now before thy feet to lay!  
Look up, look up! What shall thy sweet face be,  
That I have seen amidst such misery,  
When thou at last beginnest to rejoice.  
SLOWLY she rose, her burdened heart found voice  
In sobs and murmurs inarticulate,  
And clean forgetting all the sport of fate,  
She scarce could think that she should ever die,  
As locked in fearless, loving, strait embrace,  
They made a heaven of that lone sandy place.  
THEN on a rock smoothed by the washing sea  
They sat, and eyed each other lovingly.  
And few words at the first the maiden said,  
So wrapped she was in all the goodlyhead  
Of her new life made doubly happy now:  
For her alone the sea-breeze seemed to blow,  
For her in music did the white surf fall,  
For her alone the wheeling birds did call  
Over the shallows, and the sky for her  
Was set with white clouds, far away and clear;  
E'en as her love, this strong and lovely one  
Who held her hand, was but for her alone.  
BUT after loving silence for a while,  

She, turning round to him her heavenly smile,  
Said: Tell me, O my love, what name is thine,  
What mother brought thee forth so nigh divine,  
Whence art thou come to take away my shame?  
THEN said he: Fair love, Perseus is my name,  
Not known of men, though that may come to be;  
And her that bore me men call Danaë,  
And tales of my begetting people tell  
And call my father Jove: but it befell  
Unto my mother, when I first was born,  
That she, cast out upon the sea, forlorn  
Of help of men, unto Scriphos came;  
And there she dwells as now, not gathering shame,  
But called a Queen; and thence I come indeed,  
Sent by the gods to help thee in thy need.  
THEN he began and told her everything,  
Down to the slaying of the monstrous king,  
She listening to him meanwhile, glad at heart  
That he had played so fair and great a part.  
But all being told, she said: This salt pool nigh,  
Left by the tide, now mirrors well the sky,  
So smooth it is, and now I stand anear  
Canst thou not see my foolish visage clear,  
Yea, e'en the little gems upon my hands?  
May I not see this marvel of the lands  
So mirrored, and yet live? Make no delay,  
The sea is pouring fast into the bay,  
And we must soon be gone. Look down, he said,  
And take good heed thou turnest not thine head.  
Then gazing down, with shuddering dread and awe,  
Over her images should soon she saw  
The head rise up, so beautiful and dread,  
That, white and ghastly, yet seemed scarcely dead  
Beside the image of her own fair face,  
As, daring not to move from off the place,  
But trembling sore, she cried: Enough, O love!  
What man shall doubt thou art the son of Jove;  
I think thou wilt not die. Then with her hand  
She hid her eyes, and trembling did she stand  

85fell: cruel. Following Caxton, Morris makes Perseus more heroic by omitting any reference to such aids and instruments of intimidation as the winged slippers and Gorgon's head.
Until she felt his lips upon her cheek;
Then turning round, with anxious eyes and meek,
She gazed upon him, and some doubtful thought
Up to her brow the tender colour brought.
And sinking somewhat down her golden head,
Stammering a little now these words she said:
O GODLIKE man, thou dost not ask my name,
Or why folk gave me up to death and shame;
Dost thou not dread I am some sorceress,
Whose evil deeds well earned me that distress?
TELL me thy name, he said; yet as for thee,
I deem that thou wert bound beside the sea
Because the gods would have the dearest thing
Which thy land held for its own ransoming.
SHE said: O love, the sea is rising fast,
And time it is that we henceforth were past;
The only path that leadeth to the down
Is far, and thence a good way is the town;
Wend we, and on our journey will I tell
How all these things, now come to nought, befell.
LEAD on, he said, and lifted from the sand
The monster's head; and therewith, hand in hand,
Together underneath the cliffs they went,
The while she told her tale to this intent.

HIS is the Syrian land, this town anigh
Is Joppa, and Andromeda am I,
Daughter of him who holds the sceptre there,
King Cepheus, and Cassiope the fair.
She, smit by cruel madness, brought ill fate
Upon the land to make it desolate;
For by the place whence thou deliveredst me,
An altar to the daughters of the sea
Erewhile there stood, and we in solemn wise
Unto the maids were wont to sacrifice.

And give them gifts of honey, oil, and wine,
That we might have the love of folk divine;
And so it chanced that on a certain day,
When from that place the sea was ebbed away,
Upon the firm sands I and many a maid
About that altar went, while the flutes played
Such notes as sea-folk love; and as we went,
Upon the wind rich incense-clouds we sent
About the hallowed stone, whereon there lay
Fruits of the earth for them to bear away;
Thus did we maids, as we were wont to do,
And watching us, as was their wont also,
Our mothers stood, my own amidst the rest.
BUT ere the rites were done, as one possessed
She cried aloud: Alas, what do we now,
Such honour unto unseen folk to show!
To spend our goods, our labour, and our lives,
In serving these the careless sea-wind drives
Hither and thither through the booming seas;
While thou, Andromeda, art queen of these,
And in thy limbs such lovely godhead moves,
That thou shalt be new Mother of the Loves; n
Thou shalt not die! Go, child, and sit alone,
And take our homage on thy golden throne;
And I that bore thee will but be thy slave,
Nor shall another any worship have.
TREMBLING awhile we stood with heads downcast,
To hear those words, then from the beach we passed;
And sick at heart each went unto her home
Expecting when the fearful death should come,
Like those of Thebes, who, smit by arrows, fell
Before the feet of her who loved too well.
AND yet stayed not my mother's madness there;

87 the Syrian land: Lemprière and Ovid place Andromeda's home in Ethiopia.
88 Joppa: seaport in the Eastern Mediterranean, now know as Jaffa.
89 the daughters of the sea: the Nereids, sea-nymphs and daughters of Neptune.
90 Mother of the Loves: Venus. "The Loves" are Cupid's brothers, often portrayed as winged interchangeable infants.
91 these of Thebes: the fourteen children of Niobe, who boasted that she was superior to the goddess Latona because the latter had only two children, Apollo and Diana. Diana shot the seven girls and Apollo the seven boys. In grief, Niobe turned to stone.
She caused men make a silver image fair
Of me unhappy; round the base she writ
FAIREST OF ALL, and bade men carry it,
With flowers and music, down unto the sea,
Who on the altar fixed it solidly
Against the beating of the winds and waves.
BUT we, expecting now no quiet graves,
Trembled at every murmur of the night,
And if a cloud should hide the noon sun bright
Grew faint with terror; yet the days went by
Harmless above our great iniquity,
Until one wretched morn I woke to hear
Down in the street loud wails and cries of fear,
And my heart died within me, nor durst I
Ask for the reason of that bitter cry,
Though soon I knew it: nigh unto the sea
Were gathered folk for some festivity;
When, at the happiest moment of their feast,
Forth from the deep there came a fearful beasta
No man could name, who quickly snatched away
Their fairest maid, and with small pain did slay
Such men as there in arms before him stood;
For unto him was steel as rotten wood,
And darts as straw: nor grew the story old,
Day after day 'e'en such a tale was told.
Kiss me, my love! I grow afraid again;
Kiss me amid the memory of my pain;
Draw me to thee, that I thine arms may feel,
A better help than triple brass or steel!
ALAS, love! folk began to look on me
With angry eyes, and mutter gloomily,
As pale and trembling through the streets I passed;
And from the heavy thunder-cloud at last
The dreadful lightning quivered through the air:
For on a day the people filled the square
With arms and tumult, and my name I heard,

92a fearful beast: Compare the description of Leviathan in Job 41: 26–27:
"The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold. . . . He esteemeth iron as straw and bronze as rotten wood."
The vale the monster scooped, as 'neath my sword
He writhed, the black stream that from out him poured,
The rock we sat on, and the pool wherein
Thou sawest the gods' revenge for heedless sin:
How the green ripples of the shallow sea
Cover the strife and passion peacefully,
Nor lack the hallowing of the low broad sun.
So has love stolen upon us, lovely one,
And quenched our old lives in this new delight;
And if thou needs must think of that dull night,
That creepeth on no otherwise than this,
Yet for that thought hold closer to thy bliss:
Come nigher, come! forget the more thy pain.
SO there of all love's feasting were they faint;
Words fail to tell the joyance that they had,
And with what words they made each other glad.

O as it drew to ending of the day,
Unto the city did they take their way,
And when they stood before its walls at last
They found the heavy gate thereof shut fast,
And no one on the walls for very shame;

Then to the wicket straightway Perseus came,
And down the monster's grinning head he threw,
While on the horn a mighty blast he blew,
But no one answered; then he cried aloud:
Come forth, O warders, and no more shrink cowed
Behind your battlements! one man alone
And the great beast beside the sea lies dead:
Come forth, come forth! and gaze upon this head!
THEN opened was the door a little way,
Come forth, come forth! and gaze upon this head!
Come forth, come forth! and gaze upon this head!
THEN opened was the door a little way,
And one peered forth and saw him with the may,
And turning round some joyous words he cried

Unto the rest, who oped the great gates wide,
And through them Perseus the saved maiden led.
Then as the folk cast eyes upon the head,
They stopped their shouts to gaze thereon with fear,
And timidly the women drew near;
But soon, beholding Perseus' godlike grace,
His mighty limbs, and flushed and happy face,
Cried out unto the maid: O happy thou,
Who art well paid for every trouble now,
In winning such a godlike man as this.
And many there were fain his skirts to kiss;
But he smiled down on them, and said: Rejoice,
O girls, indeed, but yet lift heart and voice
Unto the gods to-day, and not to me!
For they it was who sent me to this sea.
And first of all fail not to bless the Maid,
Through whom it came that I was not afraid.
SO through the streets they went, and quickly spread
News that the terror of the land was dead.
And folk thronged round to see the twain go by,
Or went before with flowers and minstrelsy,
Rejoicing for the slaying of their shame.

THUS harbinger'd the happy lovers came
Unto King Cepheus' royal house of gold.
To whom by this the joyful cries had told
That all was changed and still his days were good;
So, eager in his well-built porch he stood,
No longer now in mournful rainment clad.
But when they met, then were those two more glad
Than words can say; there came her mother, too,
And round about her neck fair arms she threw,
Weeping for joy; and all about the King
The great men stood and eyed the fearful thing
That lay at Perseus' feet: then the King said:
O thou, who on this day hast saved my maid,“

95Maid: Athena.
96harbinger'd: announced.
97thou . . . in Morris's classical sources, Perseus bargain's for Andromeda's hand before he rescues her.
Wilt thou rule half my kingdom from to-day?
Or wilt thou carry half my wealth away?
Or in some temple shall we honour thee,
Setting thine image up beside the sea?
Ask what thou wilt before these mighty lords,
And straightforward is it thine without more words.
THEN in his heart laughed Perseus; and: O King,
He said, I ask indeed a mighty thing;
Yet neither will I take thy wealth away,
Or make these less a king than on this day,
And in no temple shall mine image stand
To look upon the sea that beats the land,
For fear the God who now is friend to me
Thereby should come to be mine enemy;
And yet on this day am I grown so bold,
I ask a greater gift than power or gold;
Give me thy maiden saved, to be my bride,
And let me go, because the world is wide,
And the gods hate me not, and I am fain
Some fertile land with these my hands to gain.
Nor think thereby that thou wilt get thee shame,
For if thou askest of my race and name,
Perseus I am, the son of Danaë,
Born nigh to Argos, by the sounding sea,
And those that know, call me the son of Jove,
Who in past days my mother's face did love.
THEN, glad at heart, the King said: Poor indeed
Were such a gift, to give thee to thy meed
This that thine own unconquered hands have won.
O ye! bring now the head and cast thereon
Jewels and gold from out my treasury,
Till nothing of its grimness men can see;
And let folk bring round to the harbour mouth
My ship that saileth yearly to the south;
That to his own land since it is his will
This Prince may go; nor yet without his fill

Of that which all men long for everywhere,
Honour, and gold, and women kind and fair.
And ye, O lords, to-morrow ere midday,
Come hither to my house in great array,
For then this marriage will we solemnize,
Appeasing all the gods with gifts of price.
THEN loud all shouted, and the end of day
Being come, Andromeda was led away
Unto her bower, and there within a while
She fell asleep, and in her sleep did smile,
For on the calm of that forgetfulness
Her bliss but happy longings did impress.
BUT in the Syrian King's adorned hall
Sat Perseus till the shadows 'gan to fall
Shorter beneath the moon, and still he thought
Amid the feast of what a day had brought
Unto his heart, a foolish void before;
And for the morrow must he long so sore
That all those joyances and minstrelsy
Seemed unto him but empty things to be.

ARLY next morn the city was astir,
And country folk came in from far and near
Hearing the joyous tidings that the beast
Was dead, and fain to see the marriage feast,
And joyous folk wandered from street to street
Crowned with fair flowers and singing carols sweet.
THEN to the maiden's chamber maidens came,
And woke her up to love and joyous shame,
And as the merry sun streamed through the room
Spread out unequalled marvels of the loom,
Stored up for such an end in days long done,
Ere yet her grey eyes looked upon the sun;
Fine webs like woven mist, wrought in the dawn,
Long ere the dew had left the sunniest lawn,
Gold cloth so wrought that nought of gold seemed there,
But rather sunlight over blossoms fair;
You would have said that gods had made them, bright,
To hide her body from the common light

98 meed: guerdon or prize awarded for achievement or merit.
Lest men should die from unfulfilled desire,
GEMS too they showed wrought by the hidden fire
That eats the world, and from the unquiet sea
Pearls worth the ransom of an argosy, 99
Yet all too little all these riches seemed
In worship of her, who as one who dreamed,
By her fair maidens’ hands were there arrayed,
Then, with loose hair, ungirded as a maid
Unto the threshold of the house was brought;
But when her hand familiar fingers caught,
And when that voice, that erst amidst her fear
She deemed a god’s, now smote upon her ear,
Like one new-born to heaven she seemed to be.
BUT dreamlike was the long solemnity,
Unreal the joyous streets, where yesterday
She passed half dead upon her wretched way:
And though before the flickering altar-flame
She trembled when she thought of that past shame,
And midst the shouting knit her brows to think
Of what a cup these men had hidden her drink,
Unreal they seemed, forgotten as a tale
We cannot tell, though it may still avail
For pensive thoughts betwixt the day and night.
ALL things unto the gods were done right;
Beside the sea the flame and smoke uprose
Over rich gifts of many things to those
A woman’s tongue had wounded, 100 golden veils
And images, and bowls wrought o’er with tales,
By all the altars of the gods were laid;
On this last day of maidenhood the maid
Had stood before the shrines, and there had thrown
Sweet incense on the flame, and through the town
The praises of immortals had been sung,
And sacred flowers about the houses hung;
And now the last hours of the dreamlike day
Amid great feasting slowly passed away.

99 argosy: a large merchant vessel.
100 a woman’s tongue had wounded: Andromeda’s mother had blasphemed the sea-nymphs and their father Neptune.
He asks for now; take gifts and go thy way,
Nor quench in blood the joyance of this day.
THEN forth stood Perseus with a frowning face
Before them all, and cried out from his place:
Get ye behind my back, all friends to me!
And ere the lamps are lighted ye shall see
A stranger thing than ye have ever dreamed.
And as he spake in his left hand there gleamed
The gold-wrought satchel; but amazed and cowed
Did the King's friends behind the hero crowd,
Who, ere from out the bag he drew the head,
Unto that band of fierce new-comers said:
Will ye have life or death? If life, then go
And on the grass outside your armour throw,
And then returning, drink to my delight
Until the summer sun puts out the night.
BUT loud they shouted, swaying to and fro,
And mocked at him, and cried aloud to know
If in his hand Jove's thunderbolt he had,
Or Mars' red sword that makes the eagles glad;
But Phineus, raging, cried: Take him alive,
That we for many an hour the wretch may drive
With thongs and clubs until he longs to die!
THEN all set on him with a mighty cry;
But, with a shout that thrilled high over theirs,
He drew the head out by the snaky hairs
And turned on them the baleful glassy eyes;
Then sank to silence all that storm of cries
And clashing arms; the tossing points that shone
In the last sunbeams, went out one by one
As the sun left them, for each man there died,
E'en as the shepherd on the bare hill-side,
Smitten amid the grinding of the storm;
When, while the hare lies flat in her wet form,
E'en strong men quake for fear in houses strong.

**101 Will ye have life?** In Morris's and Caxton's accounts, Perseus offers Phineus a chance to surrender. Morris's Perseus ends the battle with a quick display of the Gorgon's head, but Ovid's Perseus wounds Phineus, then turns him to stone as he begs for mercy.

**102 him whose bow:** love or Cupid.
O on the morn, when risen was the sun,
About the capstan\(^{103}\) did the shipmen run,
Warping\(^{104}\) the great ship to the harbour mouth
That yearly went for treasures to the south,
And thither from the palace did men bear
Bales of rich cloth, and golden vessels rare,
And gold new coined, and silver bars of weight.
And women—slaves with bodies slim and straight
Stood on the snow-white deck, and strong men—slaves,
Brought from some conquered land beyond the waves,
Bore down rich burdens; so when all things due
Were laid on ship-board, and to noon it grew,
Thither came Perseus with his new—wed wife,
And she, as losing somewhat of her life,
Was pensive now and silent, and regret
Moved in her that her heart must soon forget
All folk and things where first her life began,
Yea, e’en the mother, whose worn face and wain,
Tearless and haughty, yet looked o’er the sea,
As though the life wherein no good could be
She still would bear in every god’s despite.
Ah, folk forget; the damsel’s heart grew light
E’en while her country’s cliffs she yet could see.
Should she remember, when so lovingly
That cheek touched hers, and he was hers alone?

\(^{103}\)capstan: the upright winch turned to raise an anchor.
\(^{104}\)warping: moving a ship by reeling in a line fastened to an anchor or pier.
But the two lovers going on their way grew happier still, as bright day followed day;
And, the wind favouring, in a little while
They reached the low shore of the friendly isle;
And, having reached the well-built keel, took land
Where Danaë's boat first touched the yellow sand.
Then cityward alone did Perseus go,
His fatal gift unto the King to show;
And, passing through the fair fields hastily,
Reached the green precinct, where he thought to see
His mother he had left alive and well;
But from inside upon his ears there fell
A noise of shrieks and clashing arms and shouts;
There he ran, beset with many doubts,
Since Polydectes' evil wiles he knew,
And what a fate he erst had doomed him to;
So, hurring through, he reached the shrine at last,
And there beheld his mother, her arms cast
About Minerva's image, and by her
Good Dictys, who, with shield and glittering spear,
Abode the onslaught of an armed band,
At head of whom did Polydectes stand.
THEN to her side sprang Perseus with a cry, And at that sight and sound she spake on high:
Com'st thou, long looked for? nothing fear I now,
This kingly traitor soon shall lie allow.
Then the King tottered backward, and awhile
Stood staring at him: but an evil smile
Soon hid his fear, as, turning, he beheld
The glittering weapons that his stout slaves held,
And he cried out: Yea, art thou back again?

And was my story forged for thee in vain?
Be merry then, but give me place or die!
I am not one to meet thee fearfully.
But thee, O brother, must I then slay thee,
And in our house must one more story be?
Give back! nor for a woman's foolishness
Bring curses on the name thou shoulddest bless.
Set on at once then! take the three of them!
THEN once more clashed the spears; but on the hem
Of that dread satchel Perseus set his hand,
And put his friend aside, and took his stand
Betwixt his mother and the island men;
And terribly he cried: Thus take thou then
The gift thou badst me bring to thee! nor ask
Of any man again another task,
Except to throw on thee a little sand 106
That thou mayst reach in peace the shadowy land.
His mocking speech he ended with a shout,
And from the bag the dreadful head drew out,
And shook it in the King's bewildered face;
Who unto him yet strove to make one pace
With feebly brandished spear and drooping shield,
Then unto stony death his heart did yield,
And without any cry upright he died,
With fallen arms and fixed eyes staring wide.
But of his men, the bravest turned and fled,
And on the ground some trembled, well-nigh dead
For very fear, till Perseus cried: Arise,
Lay down your arms and go! Henceforth be wise;
Nor at kings' biddings 'gainst the just gods strive.
But as they slunk away, too glad to live
To need more words, and shivering with their dread,

105 Then to her side sprang Perseus with a cry: Perseus's well-timed rescue of his mother, Dictys's help, and Perseus's establishment of Dictys as king appear only in Lemprière and Apollodorus.

106 Except to throw on thee a little sand: The classical Greeks believed a dead soul could not rest unless the body was covered with a modicum of dust (see Sophocles's Antigone).
Once more did Perseus hide the fearful head,
And toward his mother turned; who, with pale face,
Stood trembling there, remembering that embrace
Within the brazen house; but now he threw
His arms about her as he used to do
When her own arms his little body bore;
And smiling, even as he smiled of yore,
He said: O mother, fear me not at all,
But yet bethink thee of the brazen wall
And golden Jove, nor doubt from him I came;
And no more now shall I be called thy shame,
But thy defence and glory everywhere.
BUT now to lovely Argos let us fare,
Too small a land this is become for thee,
And I may hope a greater sovereignty,
Who, by God's help, have done such mighty things,
Which I will tell thee of, while the wind sings
Amongst the shrouds of my rich-laden keel,
While by thy feet a god-given gift shall kneel,
My bride new won; in such-like guise will we
Come back to him who gave us to the sea,
And make our peace and all ill blood forget,
That through long happy years thou mayst live yet.
THEN did he take good Dictys by the hand
And said: O righteous man, we leave this land,
Nor leave thee giftless for the welcoming
Thou gavest us erst, nor for this other thing
That thou hast wrought for us this happy tide;
Therefore do thou as King herein abide,
And win Jove's love by helping in such wise
As thou didst us, folk sunk in miseries.
SO gave he kingdoms, as he took away,
For strong the God was in him on that day,
And the gods smiled to hear him; yea, and she
Who armed him erst, then dealt so lovingly.

She caused the people's hearts towards him to yearn,
Who, throning round, began somehow to learn
The story of his deeds, and cried aloud:
Be thou our King! Then showed he to the crowd
Dictys his friend, and said: I to my kin
Must go, mine heritage and goods to win,
And deal a king, with kings; but yet see here
This royal man, my helpful friend and dear;
Loved of the gods, surely he is of worth
For greater things. So saying he went forth,
And midst their reverence, leading by the hand
His happy mother, turned unto the strand;
And still the wondering folk with them must go,
And now such honour unto him would show,
That rather they would make him God than King;
But while fresh carols round him these did sing
They came unto the low, sea-beaten sand;
And Danaë took the Syrian by the hand
And kissed her, full of joy that such an one
Should bear brave children to her godlike son:
Then Perseus gave command, and on the shore
Great gifts they laid from out his plenteous store,
To glad King Dictys' eyes withal, and then
Bade farewell to him and his island men;
And all took ship, and hoisting sail straightway;
Departed over the restless plain and grey.

NOW fair the wind was for a day and night,\(^7\)
But on the second day as it grew light,
And they were thinking that they soon should be
At Argos, rose a tempest on the sea,
And drive them from their course unto a land
Far north thereof. So on the yellow sand

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\(^7\)NOW fair the wind was for a day and night: In Ovid, Perseus returns immediately to Argos, where he helps Acrisius regain his usurped throne.
They hauled their ship, and thereto presently
The good folk of the country drew anigh,
To make their market; and being asked, they said
That this was Thessaly, that strait paths led
Through rugged mountains to a fertile plain
Penæus\textsuperscript{108} watered, rich with many a fane:
That following down the stream they soon should come
Unto a mighty people's glorious home,
A god-loved ancient city, called of men
Larissa,\textsuperscript{109} and the time was fitting then
To go thereto, and there should they have rest,
For now each corner was an honoured guest,
Because Teutamias, the Thessalian king,
His father dead with games was honouring,
THEN to that city Perseus fain would go,
His might unto the gathered men to show;
Desiring, too, to gather tidings there
Of how the old Acrisius yet might fare,
And if unto his scarce-seen Argive home
He in good peace might venture now to come.
So of the country folk he took fair steeds
And gave them gold, and goods for all their needs,
And with a trusty band with this intent
Through the rough passes of the hills he went,
Bearing his mother and the Syrian maid:
As of a king's men deemed of his array,
When to the fertile peopled fields he came;
But yet he bade that none should tell his name.
So coming to Larissa, all men thought
That he who with him such great marvels brought
Was some great king, though scanty was his band;
So honour did he get on every hand.

But when the games began, and none could win
A prize in any if he played therein,
A greater name they gave him, saying: What worth
In this poor age is left upon the earth
To do such deeds? Surely no man this is,
But some god weary of the heavenly bliss.
AT last, when all the other games were done,
Men fell to play at casting of the stone;
And strong men cast it, mighty of their hands,
Bearers of great names in the Grecian lands:
But Perseus stood and watched the play alone,
Nor did he move when every man had thrown.
Then cried Teutamias: Nameless one! see now
How mightily these strong-armed heroes throw:
Canst thou prevail in this as in the rest?
O KING! said Perseus, now I think it best
To try the Fates no more; I must be gone:
Therefore to-day thou seest me thus alone,
For in the house my white-armed damsels stay
To order matters for our homeward way.
NAY, stranger, said the King, but rather take
This golden garland for Teutamias' sake,
And try one cast: look, here I have with me
A well-loved guest, who is most fain to see
Thy godlike strength; yea, we will draw anigh
To watch the heavy stone like Jove's bolt fly
Forth from thine hand. Then Perseus smiled and said:
Nay then, be wary, and guard well thine head!
For who of mortals knoweth where and when
The bolts of Jove shall smite down foolish men?
SO said he, and withal the King drew nigh,
And with him an old man, who anxiously
Peered round him as if looking for a foe.
Then Perseus made him ready for the throw;
But even as he stooped the stone to raise,
The old man said: That I the more may praise  
This hero's cast, come to the other end  
And we shall see the hill of granite send  
The earth and stones up as its course is spent.  
So then beyond the furthest cast they went  
By some three yards, and stood aside; but now,  
Since it was evening and the sun was low,  
Its beams were in their eyes, nor could they see  
If Perseus moved or not; then restlessly  
Looking this way or that, the ancient man,  
Gathering his garments up, in haste began  
To cross the place, but when a warning shout  
Rang in his ears, then wavering and in doubt  
He stopped, and scarcely had he time to hear  
A second cry of horror and of fear,  
Ere crushed, and beaten down upon the ground,  
The end of all his weary life he found.

HEN women shrieked, and strong men  
shouted out,  
And Perseus ran to those that drew about  
The slain old man, and asked them of his name,  
But the King, eyeing him as nigh he came,  
Said: this we know, and thy hid name we know,  
For certainly thou art his fated foe,  
His very daughter's strange-begotten son,  
The child the sea cast up, the dreaded one.  
This was Acrisius, who for fear of thee  
Shut up thy mother by the sounding sea;  
This was the man, who, for the very dread  
Of meeting thee, from lovely Argos fled  
To be my guest. Nay, let thy sharp sword bide  
Within its sheath, the world is fair and wide,110  
Nor have we aught to do to thee for this;

Go then in peace, and live in woe or bliss  
E'en as thou mayst, but stay with us no more,  
Because we fear the gods may plague us sore  
For this thy deed, though they would have it so.

HEN soberly thenceforth did Perseus go  
Unto his folk and straightly told them all  
That on that luckless day had chanced to fall;  
Wondering thereat, there made they no delay,  
But down unto the sea they took their way:  
And much did Danaë ponder as they went  
How the high gods had wrought out their intent,  
And thinking on these things she needs must sigh  
For pity of her sweet life passing by.

BUT when they reached the border of the sea,  
Then Perseus said: Though all unwittingly  
I slew this man, and though perchance of right  
His throne is mine, yet never will I fight  
Against the just gods; and I fear the stain  
Of kindred blood, if slaying him I gain  
His kingdom and the city of my birth:  
Now, therefore, since the gods have made the earth  
Most fair in many places, let us go  
Where'er the god-sent fated wind shall blow  
The ship, that carries one the high gods love.  
But first the bright-armed lovely maid of Jove  
Here let us worship, on this yellow beach,  
That her, my helper erst, we may beseech  
To grant us much, and first of all things, this,  
A land where we may dwell awhile in bliss.  
THEY heard him gladly, for the most of those  
Were young, nor yet by misshaps and by foes  
Had learned to think the world a dreary thing;  
So round about the altar did they sing.

110*the world is fair and wide...* According to Lemprière, Perseus exchanged kingdoms with his cousin Megapenthes, lord of Argos, to avoid further reminders of this accident.
And feasted well, and when the day came round
Once more, they went a-shippingboard to the sound
Of trumpets and heart-moving melody,
And gave their rich keel to the restless sea.

THEN for four days before the wind they drove,
Until at last in sight a new land hove
Their pilot called the coast of Argolis,\textsuperscript{111}
That rich in cattle and in horses is.

BUT landing there had Perseus’ godlike fame
Gone on before him, and the people came
And cried upon him for their king and lord,
The people’s saving shield and conquering sword;
So in that land he failed not to abide,
And there with many rites he purified
His fated hands of that unlooked-for guilt:
And there a town within a while he built
Men call Mycenæ.\textsuperscript{112} Peaceful grew the land
The while the ivory rod\textsuperscript{113} was in his hand,
For robbers fled, and good men still waxed strong,
And in no house was any sound of wrong,
Until the Golden Age seemed there to be,
So steeped the land was in felicity.

TIME past, and there his wife and mother died,
And he, no god, must lie down by their side,
While Alceus his first son reigned after him,
A conquering king, and fair, and strong of limb.

BUT long ere this he did not fail to lay
The sacred things that brought him on his way
Within Minerva’s temple: there with awe,
‘Twixt silver bars, all folk these marvels saw,
But not for long, for on the twentieth day
From the fair temple were they snatched away
Though by the armed priests guarded faithfully.

\textsuperscript{111}Argolis: This Peloponnesian region included Argos, Mycenæ, Tiryns, and Troizen.
\textsuperscript{112}Mycenæ: Peloponnesian city, capital of a great empire during the Trojan War.
\textsuperscript{113}Ivory rod: Medieval English rulers bore a scepter, sometimes of ivory, topped with a white dove as an emblem of royal mercy.
BEFORE the last words of his tale were done
The purple hills had hidden half the sun,
But when the story's death a silence made
Within the hall, in freshness and in shade
The trembling blossoms of the garden lay.

Few words at first the elder men could say,
For thinking how all stories end with this,
Whatever was the midway gain and bliss:
He died, and in his place was set his son;
He died, and in a few days every one
Went on their way as though he had not been.

YET with the pictures that their eyes had seen,
As still from point to point that history past,
And round their thoughts its painted veil was cast,
Their hearts were softened: far away they saw
That other world, that 'neath another law
Had lived and died; when man might hope to see
Some earthly image of Divinity,
And yet not die, but, strengthened by the sight,
Cast fear away, and go from might to might,
Until to godlike life, though short, he came,
Amidst all losses winning hope of fame,
Nor losing joy the while his life should 'dure;
For that at least his valiant strife made sure,
That still in place of dreamy, youthful hope,
With slow decay and certain death could cope.

SO mused the Wanderers, and awhile might deem
That world might not be quite an empty dream,
But dim foreshadowings of what yet might come
When they perforce must leave that new-gained home;
Foreshadowings mingled with the images
Of man's misdeeds in greater days than these.

WITH no harsh words their musing was undone,
The garden birds sang down the setting sun,
A rainy wind from 'twixt the trees arose,
And sang a mournful counterpoint to those;
And, ere the rain amidst the dark could fall,
The minstrel's song was ringing through the hall.