

PROLOGUE

THE FAITH OF LIFE

“Yea, with thine hate, O God, thou hast covered us.”

SWINBURNE, *Atalanta*

YEA, one singeth, with thine hate  
Thou hast covered us, O God !  
Nay, another answers straight  
(Low his lute's sweet period) :  
Sink those bitter staves of wrath !  
Cease that angry trumpet's blare !  
Sunlight burns a rosy path  
Yonder through the sky to where  
Flowers bud and linnets sing ;  
Love's expressed in everything ;  
We are covered with thy love

As the nestlings of a dove ;  
We are sheltered in the shadow of thy wing.

Are the roses dead to-day ?  
Is the wine spilt ? Is the flute  
Broken ? Is thy lover fled ?  
Has the dancer danced away ?  
Is the voice of ocean mute ?  
Is the hour of dreamland dead ?  
Nay, the slumbers of thine head  
Shall be until thy lures.  
Love shall gird thee as a garment while thy very  
life endures  
Sing, lute, sing a sweeter measure,  
Drown the wild discordant notes,  
Life, sob out thy chant of pleasure  
(Love a lure, and life a treasure)  
As a thousand thrushes' passion  
Throbbled it from a thousand throats,  
In the wild Hesperian garden, in the old  
Danaic fashion.

Bard of Fate, thy song is ended :  
Splendid it began and splendid

Rolled and roared and soared to sky ;  
Lofty head and knee unbended  
Dared and dazzled the offended  
Lord of Triple Diety.

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But thine arrow sped awry,  
Struck the gentle Christ again ;  
But he smiled through all his pain :  
“ Priestcraft and red tyranny  
Have usurped My crown :  
Children, in my scepter lurks  
The old fire, with you works  
All My Strength Immortal, when you tear the  
lying fabric down. ”

May Man's Spirit yet be great ?  
Gather power himself to rule,  
Master circumstance and fate,  
Laugh for joy and smile for dule,  
Weep brave tears while lute-strings sob,  
Clench brave hands when bosoms throb,  
Till his soul beyond control  
Break the fetters ; sweep across  
Worlds and waves on wings, wind-wafted, whiter  
than the albatross.

Conquering and to conquer earth ;  
Surge, a sea of fiery waves,  
Through the continent of graves,  
Bringing all the dead to birth ;  
Rage, a warrior-band to bring  
Right and truth to everything,  
Burning sorrow into mirth,  
Cradling, like a child, delight  
Born from the Cimmerian darkness of the hollow  
womb of Night,  
By the father of the gods,  
And the seasons' periods  
To Eternity, the ocean flooded with the river,  
Light

Ouranos ! Wave wide thy pinions  
Azure in the azure air,  
Over the serene dominions  
That our love has made so fair :  
Hark, O Heaven ! Hail thy sister, Earth, ex-  
panding everywhere  
With the blossom of God's smile.  
Hark, old Ouranos, awhile  
To the music welling up  
From the sea of molten glass,

From the poppy's crimson cup,  
And the mountain's hoary mass ;  
Sea and land are filled with song,  
God, whom we mistrusted long,  
    We perceive to be a friend :  
Man at last with flower and tree,  
Bird and butterfly and bee,  
Earth and fire and air and sea,  
    Will his voice divinely blend  
In a song, whose holy incense up to Heaven shall  
    ascend  
And the souls that stand and shiver  
On the borders of the River,  
    Shall their arms extend  
Unto Death as to a lover, knowing Death is not  
    the End.