

## A FRAGMENT.<sup>1</sup>

*“In the midst of the desert of Libya, on a mound of sand, lieth a young man alone and naked. Nightfall.”*

NIGHT the voluptuous, night the chaste  
Spreads her dark limbs, a vaulted splendour,  
Above the intolerable waste.  
Night the august one, night the tender  
Queens it and brides it unto me.  
I am the soul serenely free ;  
I dare to seek the austere ordeal  
That drags the hoodwink of the Real  
Back from the Maker's livid eyes  
Lustred with hate. At noon I came  
Blind in the desert, saw the sun  
Leap o'er the edge, a fury of flame

<sup>1</sup> Intended as the prologue to a history of an initiate in semi-dramatic form.

Shouting for rapture over his prize,  
The maiden body of earth. Outrun  
The violent rays; the dawn is dashed  
In one swift moment into dust.  
Long lies the land with sunlight splashed,  
Brutally violate to his lust.  
Alone and naked I watched through  
The appalling hours of noon; I parched;  
I blistered: all the ghastly crew  
Of mind's sick horror mocked me; arched  
The flaming vault of hell and pressed  
Its passionate murder in my breast.  
Seven times I strove to slay me: filled  
My mouth with sand to choke my breath.  
In vain! No loftier purpose willed  
The iron miracle of death.  
So, blind and strangled, I survive.  
So, with my skin a single scar,  
I hail the night, the night alive  
With Hathor for the evening star.  
O beauty! See me broken, burned  
Lone on the languorous Lybian plain!  
Is there one lesson to be learned

From this my voluntary pain,  
My dread initiation, long  
Desired and long deferred? The Master—  
Is he the secret of the song,  
Portent of triumph or disaster  
The night wind breathes upon the air  
Still shimmering from the fearful heat?  
Can I still trust who have learned to dare?  
All others I have known effete,  
Bid them await. Who knows to-day  
The purpose of the dread essay?  
Surely I, earlier, further fared!  
I knew the deed that closes clay,  
Division's sword by sense unbarred,  
A living lie. The deep delusion!  
Dividuality—confusion!  
These I unmasked of yore. To-day  
The hideous blue, the hideous gold  
Of sky and sand their wrath unrolled,  
Their agony and hate proclaimed.  
Is it that night shall kiss to peace  
The furious carnival that flamed  
Its ruinous ardour from the sun!

Nay, let all light, all things, but cease!  
Sense is the seal of double rule.  
The million oracles that run  
Out of the mouth of God the fool  
Are not myself. To nothing turn!  
To nothing look! Then, then!—discern  
Nothing, that one may one remain.  
So I am paid the horrible pain  
That these my brothers ordered me.  
I look upon their brows—I see  
Signs many and deep of torture past;  
A star, yon star, true peace at last.

*(There approacheth an aged man, riding upon an ass,  
with a led ass, and a Nubian servant.)*

*The Adept.* In the name of God, the One, the  
Great,  
Merciful and compassionate,  
Acclaim the perfect period  
Of ordeal past!

*The Neophyte.* There is no God!

A. Rise! in the name of obscure Fate,  
Ruthless and uncompassionate.





Then backward work; the name becomes  
With pomp of metaphysic drums  
A *causa causans*—God, soul, truth.  
So raves the riot, age and youth,  
The cart before the horse. Revered  
And reverend master, is your beard  
Darwin's survival of some tail?  
Who rants of soul were best to saddle  
His face, his arms the ass to straddle  
Since for his voice the part thus bare  
Would serve as well to scent the air.

A. Where reverence ceases, ribald jest  
Breaks forth, the wise allow the rest.  
The perfect master stands confessed.

N. Why! I supposed your wrath would  
burst;  
My name and number stand accurst  
In the great Order of the West!

A. Nay: Buddha smiles; 'twas Jesus wept!  
Arise, O brother and adept!

N. Master!

A. The torture-hours are past.

N. The peace of pain is mine at last.

A. Ere the moon rise, the brethren meet.  
Come, let us turn toward the South.  
N. Lord, I embrace thy holy feet.  
A. Nay, let me kiss thee on the mouth.