

SAID.

THE spears of the night at her onset
Are lords of the day for a while,
The magical green of the sunset,
The magical blue of the Nile.
 Afloat are the gales
 In our slumberous sails
On the beautiful breast of the Nile.

We have swooned through the midday, exhausted
By the lips—they are whips—of the sun,
The horizon befogged and befrosted
By the haze and the greys and the dun
 Of the whirlings of sand
 Let loose on the land
By the wind that is born of the sun.

On the water we stand as a shadow,
A skeleton sombre and thin
Erect on the watery meadow,
As a giant, a lord of the Djinn
 Set sentinel over
 Some queen and her lover
Beloved on the Gods and the Djinn.

We saw the moon shudder and sink
In a furnace of tremulous blue ;
We stood on the mystical brink
Of the day as it sprang to us through
 The veil of the night,
 And the babe of the light
Was begotten in the caves of the dew.

My lover and I were awake
When the noise of the dawn in our ears
Burst out like a storm or a snake
Or the rush of the Bedawi spears.
 Dawn of desire !
 But thy kiss was as fire
To thy lovers and princes and peers.

Then the ruin of night we beheld
As the sun stormed the heights of the sky
With his myriad swords, and compelled
The pale tremblers, the planets, to fly.
 He drave from their place
 All the stars for a space,
From their bastioned towers in the sky.

Thrilled through to the marrow with heat
We abode (as we glode) on the river.
Every arrow he launched from his seat,
From the white inexhaustible quiver,
 Smote us right through,
 Smote us and slew,
As we rode on the rapturous river.

Sweet sleep is perfection of love.
To die into dreams of my lover,
To wake with his mouth like a dove
Kissing me over and over!
 Better sleep so
 Than be conscious, and know
How death hath a charm to discover.

Ah! float in the cool of the gloaming!
Float wide in the lap of the stream
With his mouth ever roving and homing
To the nest where the dove is adream.
 Better wake so
 Than be thinking, and know
That at best it is only a dream.

So turn up thy face to the stars!
In their peace be at peace for awhile!
Let us pass in their luminous cars
As a sob, as a sigh, as a smile!
 Love me and laze
 Through the languorous days
On the breast of the beautiful Nile!

May, 1905.