

## THE NEOPHYTE.

**T**O-NIGHT I tread the unsubstantial way  
That looms before me, as the thundering night  
Falls on the ocean: I must stop, and pray  
One little prayer, and then—what bitter fight  
Flames at the end beyond the darkling goal?  
These are my passions that my feet must tread;  
This is my sword, the fervour of my soul;  
This is my Will, the crown upon my head.  
For see! the darkness beckons: I have gone,  
Before this terrible hour, towards the gloom,  
Braved the wild dragon, called the tiger on  
With whirling cries of pride, sought out the tomb  
Where lurking vampires batted, and my steel  
Has wrought its splendour through the gates of death.  
My courage did not falter: now I feel  
My heart beat wave-wise, and my throat catch breath  
As if I choked; some horror creeps between  
The spirit of my will and its desire,  
Some just reluctance to the Great Unseen  
That coils its nameless terrors, and its dire  
Fear round my heart; a devil cold as ice  
Breathes somewhere, for I feel his shudder take

My veins : some deadlier asp or cockatrice  
Slimes in my senses : I am half awake,  
Half automatic, as I move along  
Wrapped in a cloud of blackness deep as hell,  
Hearing afar some half-forgotten song  
As of disruption ; yet strange glories dwell  
Above my head, as if a sword of light,  
Rayed of the very Dawn, would strike within  
The limitations of this deadly night  
That folds me for the sign of death and sin—  
O Light! descend! My feet move vaguely on  
In this amazing darkness, in the gloom  
That I can touch with trembling sense. There shone  
Once, in my misty memory, in the womb  
Of some unformulated thought, the flame  
And smoke of mighty pillars ; yet my mind  
Is clouded with the horror of this same  
Path of the wise men : for my soul is blind  
Yet : and the foemen I have never feared  
I could not see (if such should cross the way),  
And therefore I am strange : my soul is seared  
With desolation of the blinding day  
I have come out from : yes, that fearful light  
Was not the Sun : my life has been the death,  
This death may be the life : my spirit sight  
Knows that at last, at least. My doubtful breath  
Is breathing in a nobler air ; I know,  
I know it in my soul, despite of this,  
The clinging darkness of the Long Ago,  
Cruel as death, and closer than a kiss,

This horror of great darkness. I am come  
Into this darkness to attain the light :  
To gain my voice I make myself as dumb :  
That I may see I close my outer sight :  
So, I am here. My brows are bent in prayer ;  
I kneel already in the Gates of Dawn ;  
And I am come, albeit unaware,  
To the deep sanctuary : my hope is drawn  
From wells profounder than the very sea.  
Yea, I am come, where least I guessed it so,  
Into the very Presence of the Three  
That Are beyond all Gods. And now I know  
What spiritual Light is drawing me  
Up to its stooping splendour. In my soul  
I feel the Spring, the all-devouring Dawn,  
Rush with my Rising. There, beyond the goal,  
The Veil is rent !

Yes : let the veil be drawn.