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THE LEGEND OF THE ROSES.

BY SAMUEL JAMES WATSON.

PART I.

The thirsty sands of the Syrian plains
Had quaffed of the blessed autumn rains,
And earth thanked heaven with her harvest smile;
Which rippled o'er vineyard and valley of grain,
By the Sun's red arrow-shafts almost slain,
From the Jordan's banks to the marge of Nile,
And the jubilant stream, from the mountain side,
To the orchard flew, as she were a bride
That had waited his coming in fruit festoons;
Which were born of the spring-time's gift of flowers,
And kept for him sweet in her treasure-bowers,
Where she fed them on dew and on summer noons.

It was in the hush of the autumn night,
The o'erhanging moon was shining,
And sprinkling the vine leaves with flakes of light;
And two Hebrew maidens, reclining
On a brooklet's bank, where the violets bent,
As the low-voiced breezes above them went
To respond to the stream's repining.

In their hearts was joy, like a bridegroom crowned,
His golden empire keeping;
And their sun-lit future's furthest bound
On pleasure's bosom lay sleeping;
And the shadow of sorrow stood off as far
As a cypress leaf, from the brightest star
The moon in her course was meeting.

A cloud that is nearing the moon's vexed brow
Hath passed with its spiteful veiling;
But the place of one maiden is vacant now,
And the other's heart is failing;
And there rings through the vault of the startled air
A cry for pity, a moaning prayer—
The soul through the wild voice waiving.

Again there was calm on that autumn night,
No sound through the air was flowing;
Save when the breeze, in its sweet, low flight,
Through the sleeping gardens going,
Was whispering the flowers to wake, and see
How aloft in the heavens, so gloriously,
The lamps of the night were glowing.

In the gloomy pride of the judges' state,
The chiefs of the stern Sanhedrim sate
With their pitiless eyes on the floor bent down,
On their brows of granite a frozen frown;
Their white lips sealed, like the merciless tomb,
To open only when death or doom
Came forth, to the prisoner standing there
As hopeless as one in a lion's lair.

They sate like leopards, these judges grim,
Like Leopards crouched on the outer rim
Of the red arena, where Rome displayed
The slaughter feasts, for her triumphs made;
And thus they waited their time of prey,
And fumed and chafed at the short delay
Which placed the sands of one ebbing hour
'Twixt the captive's fate and the fang of power.

Bowed down with terror and with shame,
Guarded and bound, a prisoner came;
Round her a sackcloth shroud was flung,
Down to her feet her fetters hung;
Speechless she stood, but the moist eye
Spoke out that wordless agony
Which comes, when crushing grief hath come,
To strike the senses dull and dumb,
To shake the reason on its throne,
And leave but life and breath alone.

It is not sympathy that greets
The maid's accuser, for he meets
Fierce scowls of old aversion born,
Embittered looks of hate and scorn.
Harsh, the usurer, was known
Amongst his tribe to stand alone,
As one who fierce delight would take
In torturing, for the torture's sake;
Who jested at the widow's prayer,
Who swept away the orphan's share,
And sterner grew if asked to spare.

"Harsh, come forth!" the High Priest said,
"And make thy charge, yield not to fear;
Heaven's wrath will fall upon his head
Who dares obstruct its justice here.
Then, thus adjured, the usurer starts;
His story had been pondered well,
His words, which oft had seared men's hearts,
Like drops of molten iron fell—
"Oh it hath caused me many a tear,
Ere I resolved to venture here:
And little thought I at the time
I laid my brother in the clay,
That I should have to charge a crime
Against his daughter here to-day."

One night, of late, I mused alone
Within my garden, when there came
A sudden cloud of incense blown
From the girl's casement, and a flame
Followed the incense, and then died,
Like meteor at eventide.

With pain I never felt before,
I sought my niece's chamber-door;
And, peering in, a sight I saw
Which filled my soul with speechless awe;
Burning sweet-smelling sandal-wood
Before an idol Cydna stood!"

And then came from the High Priest's lips
Words which o'er hope shed death-eclipse:
"In lust of heart, by ill-advice,
She hath done heathen sacrifice;
Thou, Cydna, shalt be burned with fire,
So let idolaters expire."

Scarce had he ended when a shriek
That blanched the bravest hearer's cheek
Rang from her lips, and then she fell,
And sweet oblivion took the place
Of memory, and some said 'twere well
If death had breathed upon her face.
And so they sadly bore her hence
Like a crushed lily, and as mute;
But doomed to wake to poignant sense
Ere reaching the grim scaffold's foot.

PART II.

'Twas night, before the prisoner's cell
Two armed men kept silent ward;
But in his heart, each sentinel,
The task and plabe alike abhorred,
For well they knew the day would bring
Death, through a hideous suffering,
To her whose moans and clanking chains
Pierced their hearts, and chilled their veins.

'Twas dismal scene. The blinking light
Seemed dull, red blotch upon the night;
And, as its ghastly glimmer sprawled
At random through the thick, moist air,
It sought the nooks where reptiles crawled,
And showed the bloated scorpion's lair;
And when some broken ray had strayed
Into the weird domain of shade,
Misshapen forms would seem to grow
On dripping wall and slimy floor,
Like ghouls that scented human woe,
And yearned and grinned for human gore.

One of the men who kept the guard
From which his better nature shrank,
Thallon was named; and, for reward
Of valor, held a tribune's rank.
He was a man who pondered o'er
Things which, when reasoned, vex the more—
Life, death, the origin of ill,
The might and mystery of will,
And much he wished to learn aright
The lessons shown in dreams by night;
And long believed they might bestow
A glimpse of future weal or woe.

His comrade, Quintus, had his home
And birthplace, too, in glorious Rome;
His was a mind quick to receive,
And quick, on seeing, to believe;
Whose hard, and gnarled, and stubborn sense
Was proof 'gainst all save evidence.

Tired of the thoughts that silence brings
From under memory's teeming wings,
And which, like ghosts, unbidden come,
When the brave human voice is dumb,
Thallon and his comrade spoke,
And the oppressive silence broke.

THALLON.

"I dreamt last night a strange, bewildering dream,
For fancy banished reason from my brain,
And filled his throne with phantoms."

QUINTUS.

"Dreams are the ghosts of thoughts the daylight
And darkness brings them back again to haunt us."

THALLON.

"Midnight hath lessons as the noonday hath,
And 'tis in sleep we learn them."

QUINTUS.

"If thy dream be of evil augury,
'Tis but a proof such dreams give useless pain;
If they unfold no plan by which we may
Escape the ills they threaten. Thus they seem
Mere frightful-visaged messengers of Fate,
Which, with mischievous prescience of the Future,
Come to unman us, and to strike down Hope,
Which is the soul of Courage."

THALLON.

"I dreamt I stood upon a lordly tower,
Before me stretched a sea of golden grain,
Which rose and rocked in many a sunny wave,
Each billow, like the bounteous breast of Ceres,
At every heave, bestowing birth to others.
Behind me rose the blue, sky-pillowing hills,
Upon whose sides ambitious cities soared
On wings of marble and magnificence.
From out those cities multitudes of men
Approached to where I stood, and there they paused.
And, opening in the midst, disclosed to view
An altar, smoking, and, beside its foot,
A victim bound; then next I saw the Priest
Standing expectant, in that heartless calm
Which habit gives to those whom privilege
Sets up on high to cause or witness suffering.
All of a sudden, from the multitude,
Burst forth a deafening and appalling roar,
'Let sacrifice begin!' Then flashed the knife—
But at that moment came a gentle voice,
With that authority of mystery born,
And sweeter than a sacred fountain's hymn,
Responding to the nightingales that sing
The myrtles of fair Tempé into slumber.
And the voice said: 'Let what is bound go free!'
I looked around, and then, amazed, I saw
Defined upon the air, a wondrous face
Beaming with light, and whereon Love sat throned
As in its native heaven; upon the brow
Reposed the majesty of perfect manhood
Pillowed on infant innocence; the eye
Shone with a tenderness akin to sadness,
And look of yearning that was infinite,
And seemed unsatisfied; upon the lips,
Which looked attuned to Mercy's harmonies,
All gracious words sat winged and fluttering,
And ready to go forth and banish pain.
In mine own land, in boyhood, I have seen
Our Phidian Jupiter, in burnished gold
And dazzling ivory, when the early morn
Flooded his fane with radiance; but this face
Outshone his, as the noonday rays outshine
The flickering of the glow-worm; for it seemed
Like light, incarnate in miraculous mould.
Of perfect beauty; and the counterpart
Of his, whom we have seen, and who is called
The 'Healer of the People.'"

QUINTUS.

"There may, perhaps, be something in the dream;
Still, minds o'erworked by day will play by night,
For then the madman that's in all of us,
Slips off his chains, works unnumbered pranks,
And while his keeper, Reason, is asleep,
Holds revel in his prison of the brain,
And shakes it, as he meant to o'erthrow it."

THALLON.

"Hast thou e'en seen him whom I just have named,
And who, for countless deeds of timely mercy,
Is, throughout all the Judean land, adored;
And called by fonder name than Cæsar is,
The 'Healer of the People?'"

QUINTUS.

"I have beheld him many a time, and still
He looked more gracious than he did before;
What is to me a baffling mystery,
His miracles—which so astound men's eyes,
Wherein his will o'er-rides all natural laws,
And sends experience and reason both
To do dumb war with wonder—seem to me
To be performed to show his love to men,
Rather than show his power, which ever gives,
Unlike all power the world e'er saw before,
The foremost place to kindness."

THALLON.

"I've heard it whispered as a thing most strange,
That, much about the time when he was born,
The gods ceased to converse with mortal men
In old oracular utterance."

QUINTUS.

"I now am old enough to call to mind
The time when all the oracles grew dumb,
And the gods chose to mock their worshippers
With taunting marble muteness."

THALLON.

"I've heard it said among us Greeks at home,
That, at the time the oracles grew dumb,
A strange thing happened on the sea at night,
Wouldst like to hear the tale?'"

QUINTUS.

In mystery there is a fascination
Which all men yield to; and, fair Truth herself,
Wears not such pleasing visage if she come
Wanting the robe of strangeness."

THALLON.

"THE FIRST CHRISTMAS."

"'Twas night, a Grecian pilot calmly steering
By the bright beams of the stars o'erhead,
Heard a weird voice along the waves careering,
Saying in thunder tones, 'Great Pan is dead.'"

He glanced around, no vessel was in showing,
Nor could he aught in human shape descrie;
He only saw the billows white plumes flowing
In the wake of the cloud-waves of the sky.

He saw no Naiad near, with tresses streaming
Like web of gold with amethysts entwined;
To tell him that, no more, save in priest's dreaming,
Pan should hold rule o'er meadow, vale and grove,

And that the gods had earthy grown, and olden,
In their long contact both with men and time;
That now foul rags disclosed what garments golden
Had hidden from all eyes in days of prime.

The pilot heard no tale like this, when leaning
Across his helm, to listen, but he read
Some strange, dead import in the mystic meaning
Of the four solemn words, "Great Pan is Dead."

And as they went, like funeral echoes booming,
They stirred the pilot's soul with prescient fear;
Was the Old passing, was a new age looming,
Was the Ideal past, the Real near?

He left this unto Fate, but told the warning;
O'er every haunt of Nymph and Fawn it spread;
And, ere on noon-day's breast had swooned the
[morning,
All Greece had heard the wail "Great Pan is
[Dead."

Scarce had the soldier ceased, when rung
Throughout the dungeon vaults a cry
That scared the crows' d' bat where it clung,
And made the owl whizz faster lay.

And, for a moment, stricken pale,
Each soldier grasped his ready sword,
But sheathed it, for 'twas Cydna's wail,
Fell on their ear, word choking word.

CYDNA.

Oh woe is me for youth, and hope, and love!
Woe, that blind Fate, in smiting, did not smite
In the unconscious time of infancy,
When the sealed senses blunt the edge of doom
In seeing not its coming.

Oh it is mercy more than misery
To die in age, when Love stands by to see
That the few sentient sands within life's glass
Shall not be shaken rudely—that life's flame,
Now dwindled from a torch to a mere speck
Upon the edge of darkness, shall not sink
'Midst wrack and roar, and tempest, but shall fade,
At its own will, like a beloved star,
Which, watched by kindly eyes, the whole night
[through,
Withdraws itself, at its appointed time,
Into the morning's bosom.

I to burn incense to a heathen god!
The very weight and horror of the lie
Fell on me like a mountain, and choked up,
With its foul bulk, the channels of all thought,
The avenues of reason, and the springs
Of speech which never shaped itself in prayer
To aught in shape of idol.

Oh, arrowy thought of keenest agony!
That I, who am a maid of Judah's tribe,
With ample privilege of place and dower,
And, with these outward gifts, that far outshine,
In eyes of men, the mere dead gleam of gold
Upon the necks and brows of princesses,—
That I am severed from the common hope,
Shared by all maids of David's royal line,
Of being the mother of the Promised One,
Israel's Messiah, Chief of all our race.

And what a hideous mockery of youth's dreams!
The faggot to replace the wedding torch,
The charring flame to make my bridal robe,
And the smoke for my nuptial canopy.
Oh, for that draught for which the wretched thirst,
To drown all thought and sense ere this day's moon—
The blessed waters of oblivion.

PART III.

The hour was noon—the sun, overhead,
Glared down with fierce and blistering glance;
All breaths of heaven with heat were dead,
The air was hushed in sweltering trance.
Such heat it was as one may feel
Close by a furnace, when the heat
Of its red arteries make to reel.

The very ground beneath our feet;
Whilst the air o'er it sways and aways,
As if 'twere torn in mortal pain
Upon the forked rack of the blaze;
And, after swooning, racked again.

In spite of heat and dust and glare,
Around a stake there sadly stood
Speaking no word, except in prayer,
A vast, awe-stricken multitude,
And well might she beside that stake,
Both prayer and sympathy awake;
For far and near 'twas known and told,
She had been sacrificed for gold;
By him who had, for lucre's lust,
Betrayed his brother's orphan-trust.

'Twas sight to stand for life apart,
As sorest that e'er smote the heart;
To see the victim's aspect wild,
The clasping chains, the faggots piled;
The speak of smoke that marked out where
Crouched the grim executioner,
The first time conscious of disgrace,
And seeking to conceal his face.

But there were those in whom there dwelt
A wild hope, unexpressed, but felt.
That ere the moment had expired,
Which should behold the faggot fired;
Some Heaven-sent help, as yet unknown,
Should in an instant's time be shown,
And, coming as the death-torch come,
To light the pile, dash out its flame.

But hope is false, and help too late;
The hour has come—the hour of fate.
The pile is fired, the smoke ascends,
And a wild shriek the silence rends;
And every eye with tears is filled,
And every pulse with fear is stilled.

But hark! there rings a distant cheer,
Louder it grows in rolling near;
It shakes the air, it wakes the hills,
Through every heart it leaps and thrills;
And, like a joyous herald, brings
The sound of help upon its wings.

As the eye takes in, at a sudden sweep,
The lordliest peak on a mountain's steep,
The loveliest star in night's glittering dome,
The beacon's first flash o'er the storm-dark foam;
The brightest cloud that sails, smiling on,
When the day mounts up on the wings of dawn—

So each eye took in, at one rapid glance,
A glorious form which it saw advance;
With a look of pity, a brow benign,
A face on which there was seen to shine
In matchless majesty, love divine.
And thus amidst joy-burst and heart acclaim,
The Healer and Friend of the People came.

He paused at the stake—of their own accord
The flames fell down at the sight of the Lord;
And that Voice, whose power had raised up the dead,

In tones of ineffable sweetness said,
"Daughter, thine innocence pleads to me,
Come hence and live, for I make thee free!"

Then burst asunder every chain,
Then ceased in Cydna every pain;
And, in new beauty, forth she came
Unharm'd by fire, unscorched by flame.

For but a pulse-beat's flying space
Amazement sat on every face;
All hearts stood still, all speech was hushed,
And vision under wonder crushed.
But soon as thought regained her throne,
And o'er the other senses shone,
And flashed on all, in full extent,
The miracle, and what it meant;
Then speech burst through the silence-seal.
And rose to Heaven, peal chasing peal;
Up and around, the cheering rolled.
It shook the temple's dome of gold;
And then across the Kedron spread,
And o'er the Valley of the Dead;
Then gathering volume, as it met
The echoes of Mount Olivet,
Descended, booming, to the vales,
Loud as a hundred winter gales—
It roused the shepherd where he lay
To drowse the noon-tide's heat away;
In husbandman, by field and hill,
It woke a keen delightful thrill:
(For those enslaved still hail the strange,
And welcome aught that alters change.)
It scared the eagle as he swept
The dizziest cloud where sunlight slept;
And made him turn his gaze away
From sleeping babe, he marked far prey;
Eastward it spread to Jordan's brink,
Fighting the lion crouched to drink;
Westward it pealed, o'er deserts free,
Winging toward the Middle Sea.

And now the mountain echoes ring,
With the loud shout, "we'll make him King!"
And, as one man, the multitude
Darted their glances where he stood,
Prepared, at once, to bear him thrice,
And crown him with all reverence.
It was in vain—they only saw
The maiden whom he saved, in prayer;
And learnt, with feelings of deep awe,
That he had vanished. None knew where.

Then lo, as if the more to swell
The wonder of the miracle,
And splendour out of death to bring,
And cause from ashes life to spring—
The burning embers, hissing warm,
Obeying His almighty power,
Change, in a moment, to a form
Of beauty only seen that hour,
And, as the shape of flowers, they take,
'Tis as red roses they awake,
And next, the ashes upward rise,
And a fresh miracle disclose,
Opening, the first time to the skies,
The bosom of the fair white rose.

[THE END.]

There are a variety of Bitters which have, at one time or another, obtained a celebrity in this country. We have had the Stoughton, and the Boker, which are really good Bitters, and based upon the Gentian Root, which has been believed by the red men to possess wondrous powers; the medicine-men used it as one of the main-stays of their primitive Pharmacopea. Then we have had several kinds of American bitters which for a time attained an immense sale, but it was soon discovered that they were simply composed of cheap Pennsylvania Rye Whisky, a mere covering for cheating the Maine Liquor Law, and it was found they were a delusion and a snare, and induced a desire for drink, which led to the most painful results, and sometimes created a habit which ended with the grave. But in Bobolo we have a preparation without the slightest trace of any alcoholic element. We have a tonic, an anti-dyspeptic of the most harmless nature, and one which acts like a charm. Its odour is not only aromatic, but the flavour is pleasing, and as a stimulant to excite the appetite it is unexcelled. It has been known for years throughout South America. It is prepared by St. Aves de Melle Cordozo, Tabatinga, Peru. It is for sale everywhere, and we can only advise our readers to try Bobolo in order to prove its efficacy.

Man sometimes has his peculiar privileges as well as the human race's more beautiful companion—woman. The lovely and the fair of the gentle sex have their Milliners, whose precincts and sacred chambers we are forbidden to enter. But we poor bipeds have our one trade sanctum too. That men wear socks, drawers, shirts, under and over, that we wear scarfs and neckties, gloves and cuffs, they may know, but our desire to have these articles of the latest style, of the best manufacturers, and that we are as particular about the delicate softness and nicety of these goods, they would hardly believe. Yet so it is, we select from every colour in the rainbow, we hesitate over a dozen styles and varieties. Some shops we leave, knowing that they are trying to palm old patterns on us. Now, we understand London and Paris goods, and when we walk into Mr. Gagnon's, 300 Notre Dame Street, we see at once he is a man of taste, one after our own heart. We see that his scarfs have the last charm of blended colours, that his gloves are soft as a blooming maiden's cheek, that his shirts have the make and the characteristic style of Regent Street, London, or Rue de Rivoli, Paris. To our readers we can say G. A. Gagnon's is, *par excellence*, the place for gentlemen to buy.