

A Blossom of the Sea

"A shout and merry voices broke my rest.
Nausicaa, the daughter of the king,
A queen of beauty, stately and divine,
Sported among her maidens on the shore.
The maidens fled, like timid frightened doves;
But she for my distress cared tenderly,
Gave soul-reviving wine, ambrosial food,
Warm, comely garments wrought of purple wool,
And kindly guidance to her father's hall.
Within the palace, rich with bronze and gold,
On thrones enrobed by skilful, queenly hand,
Arete sat and kingly Alcinous.
They gave me courteous greeting, gathered all
The princes of the wide Phæacian land,
Prepared a bounteous, equal feast,
Whereat the blind old bard Demodocus
Began to sing of heroes and of Troy.
While thus he sang I bowed my head and wept,
Re-living all the glorious strife again.
The wondering king inquiring why I wept
I told my name and all my bitter woes,
And long desire to reach my native isle.
" 'Fain had I wished,' the goodly king replied,
'That thou wouldst in my palace dwell content
And take my comely daughter as thy bride,
Whose heart thy woes and warlike deeds have won.
But, since thy mind is set on swift return
Where faithful waits thy bride of early youth,
Rich presents shalt thou have and guidance home.'