

THE LYRE DEGENERATE.

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The literature of the soul of nature as found in the great poets is inspiring; but the decadent worship of beast, gnat and straddle-bug in the animal story and the artificial nature-verse of to-day is degrading.—It is time that men of thought and spirit regenerate the world of America from its present materialistic slough with its consequent superficial cult of neo-paganism.

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VANISHED the golden Homer,
Vanished the great god Pan,
Vanished the mighty mind of Greece,
The ultimate visions of man.

Gone are the mighty moderns,
Hands that swept the keys,
That ran the splendid gamut of dream,
Of life's deep harmonies.

Dead are the lofty dreamers,
The true and the wise of earth,
Who stirred the spirits of yearning men
And gave new impulse birth.

No more those ladders to heaven,
Golden rung upon rung
Of the lofty deed and the splendid dream
In the song of singers is sung;—

For now in the shrunken pages
Of helot dreamers of song
The idiot children of primal earth—
Brute and insect throng.

And this the end of beauty
The ultimate dreaming of man,
To shrink to this hideous meaningless cult.
Alas for the great god Pan!

Alas for the lore of sages!
Alas for the Parthenon!
Alas for the yearning Israelite
His mountains of woe upon!

After the mind of Shakespeare,
After the soul of Christ,
To sink to the level of hoof and paw,
To keep this hideous tryst;

Lost to that higher holier thought
Under this latter-day gleam,
Living again in the mind of the beast
An earlier dreader dream.

Sunk to the law of the jungle and fen
From the dream of the godlike man,
To learn in the lore of reptile and brute
The cunning of Caliban.

And this the end of the ages' art
The world's high yearning pain,
To trace the trail of the serpent and egg
On the monster earth again.

To know eternity howl and yelp,
The primal instincts dream;
To bask in the sun or curl in the dusk
Of an arctic moonlight's gleam.

Yes, better than all this age can give,
Rather our lowest our least;
Better to sin as men and women
Than sink to the best of the beast.

Better than live in this hideous round
Of claw and beak and wing,
Better the dread eternal black
Of death's eternal ring.....

And Thou who art of all things Lord,
By whom all perish or dream,
Who wakest the flower the star the love,
The mighty world or the gleam;

Who after sad winter wakest the rose,
After midnight the dawn,
By whose dread word the children of earth
Up thy mountains have gone;

Teach me the lesson that mother earth
Teacheth her children each hour,
When she keeps in her deeps the basic root
And wears on her breast the flower.

And as the brute to the basic root
In the infinite cosmic plan,
So in the plan of the infinite mind
The flower of the brute is man;—

Man who blossoms in beauty and love
And wisdom's wondrous bloom,
And climbs by spiral stairways dread
To the dawn of the world's great doom....

And when doth come that marvelous change,
Thou Master of being and death,
O let me die as the great dead died,
Not passing of instinct's breath;—

Let me lie down with a loftier thought
Than passing of beast and leaf,
That the cry of human soul for soul
Is greater than nature's grief;

That man is nearer the mountains of God
Than in those ages when
He slept the sleep of the tiger and fox
And woke to the strife of the den.

And when from the winter of thy wild death
Thine angels of sunlight call;
Waken me unto my highest my best,
Or waken me not at all.

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