

"But by thine hand, by thy sweet life and
eyes,
By thy great heart and these clasped
knees, O son,
I pray thee that thou slay me not with
thee,"

and includes these lines, that in the majestic simplicity of their truth to nature reject the platitude of comment,

"For what lies light on many and they
forget,
Small things and transitory as a wind o'
the sea,
I forget never; I have seen thee all thine
years

A man in arms, strong and a joy to men,
Seeing thine head glitter and thine hand
burn its way

Through a heavy and iron furrow of sun-
dering spear;

But always also a flower of three suns old.
The small one thing that lying drew down
my life

To lie with thee and feed thee; a child
and weak,

Mine a delight to no man, sweet to me."

Outside of the semi-choruses and the stanzas at the close, there are six choruses. Taking them in order, they might be named, *The Coming of Spring*, *The Creation of Man*, *The Birth of Venus*, *The Sorrow of Life*, *The Hymn to Artemis*, *Fate*. The first opens with that classic example of decorative alliteration:

"When the hounds of spring are on win-
ter's traces,

The mother of months in meadow or
plain

Fills the shadow and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain."

In *Meleager's* declaration of his intention to persist in his love for *Atalanta*, even in the teeth of *Althoea's* warning, we see the tragic role that is to be played by this luckless passion. It is, therefore, with the appropriateness and in the manner of our Elizabethan dramatists that *Swinburne* chooses this point to introduce his hymn to *Aphrodite*. At the beginning, and once or twice during the progress of this chorus, the poet uses the (odd) rhyme-scheme, abcd. abcd.

In the fourth chorus—*The Sorrow of Life*—we have one more variation upon that eternal theme of the modern lyricist, the evanescence of all earthly things and the contradictions of human life. *Pes-*

simism and a timid rebellion against the gods or God also enter. This mournful lyric closes with an admonition to silent endurance.

In the next chorus—*The Hymn to Artemis*—the absence of a single full pause for three-fourths of its course is pointless and somewhat tiresome. In spite of this, however, it is a dainty bit of verse. The first half of the chorus is idyllic, the second mingled prayer and praise.

The name given above to the sixth chorus is a fair index of its context.

The six stanzas headed "semi-chorus" with the rhyme-order abccab are a sort of abstract narrative, repeating several times the incident of the burnt brand. The only excuse for associating them with the choruses is that they are in lyric measure.

Althoe's lament for her brethren, beginning

"I would I had died for these,"

and resuming after the interruption of the chorus, might be set down as first in order of a number of lyrical passages. We have here no conventional elegiac, but genuine sorrow. This continues for upwards of two hundred lines, though pure grief is, towards the close, alloyed with perplexity and mother's love.

The hysteric exaltation of the queen just before she calls the girls' attention to the flaming brand (of which the following lines give a fair idea):

"Fate's are we,
Yet Fate is ours a breathing space; yea,
mine.

Fate is made mine forever; he is my son,
My bedfellow, my brother"

as well as her words while the fire does its work must be put down as lyrical. Indeed, the woman's love for her son finds its most sublime, because most passionate, expression in the words,

"Yet, O child,
Son, first-born, fairest—O sweet mouth,
sweet eyes,

That drew my life out through my suck-
ling breast,

That shone and clove mine heart through.
O soft knees

Clinging, O tender treadings of soft feet,