

Far up the hills whence sound of shepherd-pipes
Blends with the murmur of a water-fall;
Tall soldier-palms that stand in ordered file,
Plumed and expectant of their coming queen;
These are the offerings laid at thy feet
In welcome from the land. I also bring
Oblations: full-orbed breasts, round limbs, dark eyes
And lips red-ripe for love. Lo, I am ready
For passion of all mothers, from the maid
Behind the mill to her upon a throne.
I would bring a woman's gift, dear Mother Nile:
A man-child limbed and shouldered like a god,
And with prophetic splendour in his eyes;
One who will speak the word against all thrones;
Who will not be afraid of what is written
On altar-stones or sacrificial jars;
A trumpeter to action and a voice
Stirring the people from their ancient sleep.
To bring thee such a gift, I would endure
The insolence of men who make for women
Seraglios; tempt them with carnelian floors
And ivory couches; blind them with the glare
Of graven cups of gold on silken cloths
Spread over cedar tables. With what lies
Have men deceived us. Yet would I bow down,
O Mother Nile, before some lord to bear
My man-child who shall be the thunderer
Against all wrong. . . .