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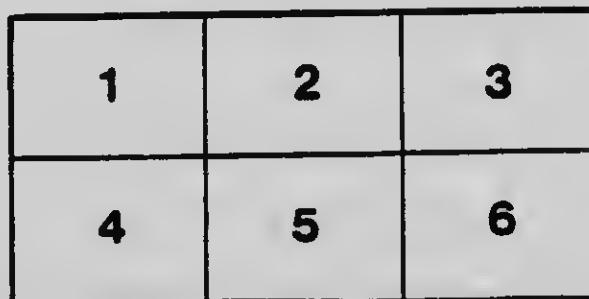
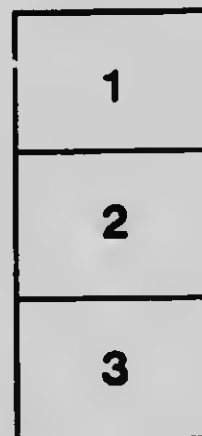
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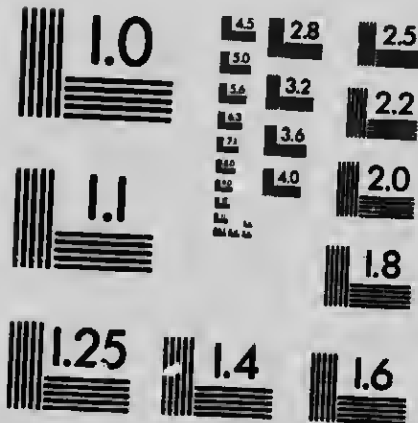
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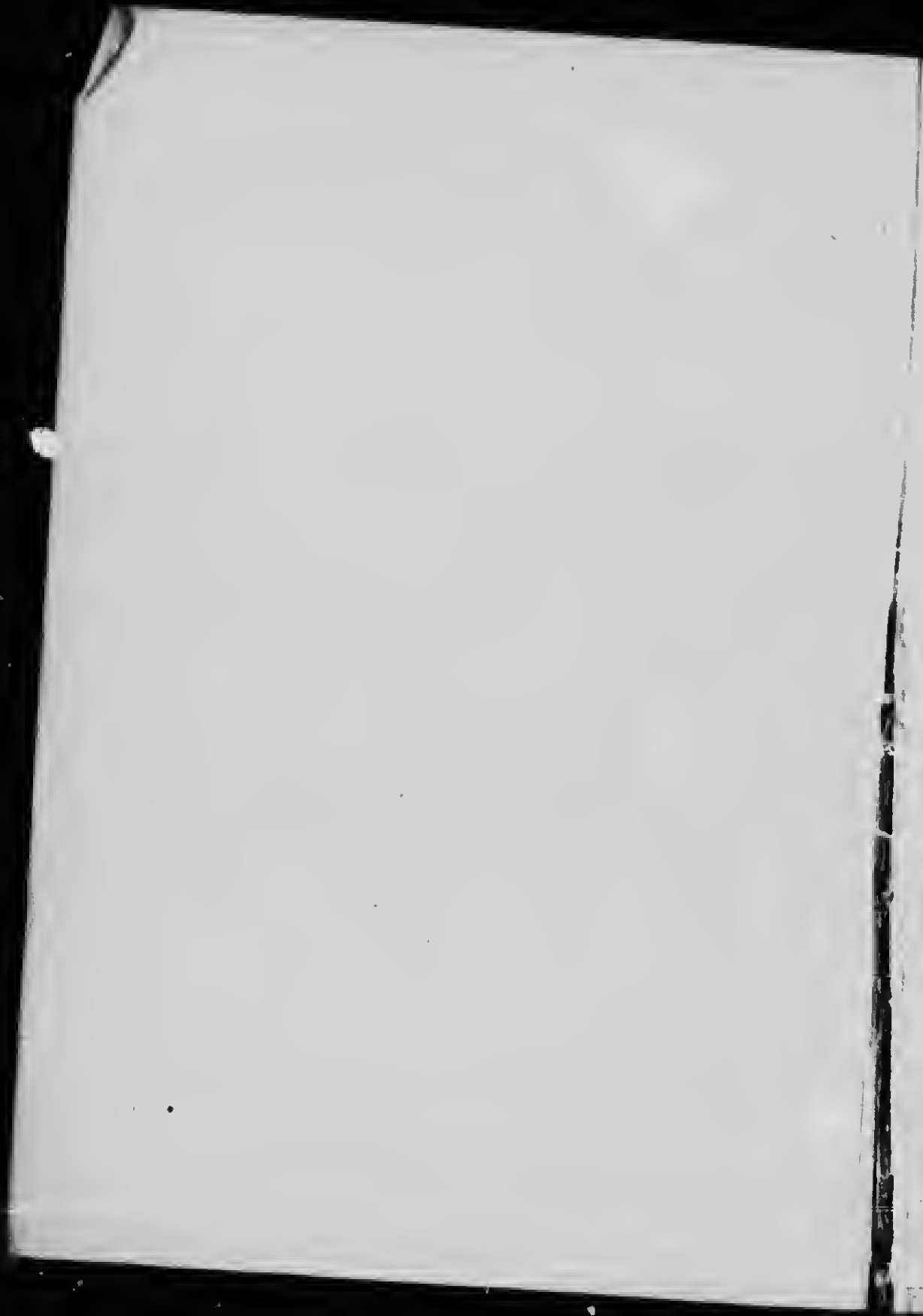
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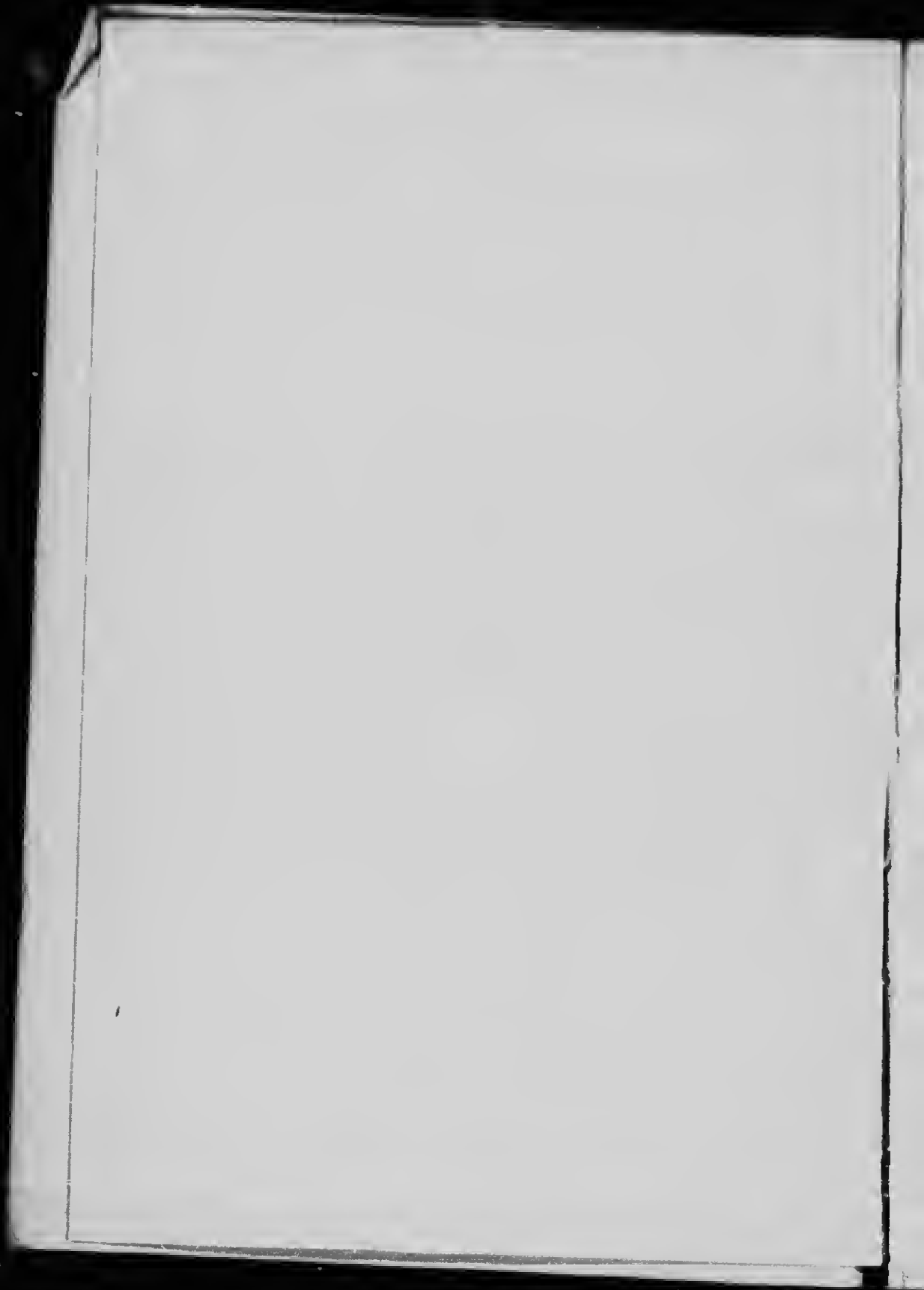
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**THE  
SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS**





**THE SUPERHUMAN  
ANTAGONISTS**

**AND OTHER POEMS**

**BY**

**SIR WILLIAM WATSON**

**HODDER AND STOUGHTON**

**LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO**

*Printed in 1919*

## PREFACE

To prevent even a possibility of misunderstanding, it seems best to indicate briefly here the precise extent of my indebtedness, in *The Super-human Antagonists*, to ancient Persian mythology. It is soon stated. I have borrowed from that mythology its fundamental idea : the idea of a world ruled by two mutually hostile beings, Ormazd and Ahriman, the Good and the Evil Spirit : and I have brought into my story, with sufficient modification of their native attributes, three of the many divinities or demigods who in the Zend-Avesta are pictured as revolving about the central figure of Ormazd, the all-beneficent. That is the full account of my obligation.

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

The narrative which I have woven around these personages is my own invention, and the credit or discredit of it must be borne solely by me. Moreover, while drawing upon the plentiful if somewhat unchastened resources of this Mid-Eastern Pantheon to the extent here stated, I have not, where only its minor elements are concerned, bound myself to any scrupulous observance of its constitution or composition. Its cardinal and governing conception is of profound and imposing significance, but its incidental features have not the same grandeur, and with regard to these I have used such liberty as the traditional prerogative of the Poet seemed to sanction. Perhaps I ought to add, that while adopting for my purposes, in its main general outline, an archaic creed, I have not thought it necessary to hamper myself with a primitive cos-

## PREFACE

mography, preferring to accept as a framework the verified Universe in which fancy, after all, has liberal room for play.

In the word *Ormazd* I have chosen the form favoured by the most modern scholarship, in preference to others heretofore current; not that I am competent to hold any opinion as to its relative accuracy, but because in point of sound it seems to commend itself better to English ears.

And now I take occasion to say, with what the reader may if he choose call egotism, that this poem, whatever it achieves, at any rate attempts no mean or slight things; and though I have written it in about six hundred lines, it could perhaps have been written more easily and more quickly in twice or thrice that number. A few months hence it will be just forty years since I carried to a then pro-

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

minent publisher, since deceased, the manuscript of my first book. *The Prince's Quest* was written in the same metre as *The Superhuman Antagonists*: both belong to the region of fantasy: but in methods of workmanship, as well as in those matters which lie nearer to the springs of thought and feeling, they are perhaps as little related as any two productions from the same hand and brain could be. Forty years, as I have said, separate them: forty years of a far from bookish life, in which I have seen something of many countries, have counted among my friends many famous persons, have known very varied fortunes, have had memorable and great experiences, and have lived intensely through much peace and war. Yet at the end of these four decades, and in the poem now being put forth—a poem written with un-

## PREFACE

hasty pen, mainly among the majestic English mountains, partly on the lovely Irish coast, with my young children growing beside me as it grew—I find myself once more dwelling in an atmosphere of romantic idealism akin to optimistic faith. It is an atmosphere which to some eyes may seem to take on illusive colours, but it has at all events nothing in it that can deaden or enervate, and while it does not chill, neither does it fever. Perhaps it may sometimes even brace and hearten, and to do so is surely Poetry's own noblest office. For Poetry should without doubt gratify the sense, but it should also fortify the soul, and the degree in which it harmonises these functions and performs them with power is the measure of its true and enduring worth.

A word as to the lesser poems in this volume. Most of them have

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

already appeared in reviews, magazines or the daily press. The poem acclaiming America's intervention in the war, and the one in which Ireland's mood of detachment from that struggle is lamented, were first published when their respective themes were engaging general attention. They are now reprinted without essential change.

W. W.

*April 1919.*



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**THE SUPERHUMAN  
ANTAGONISTS**

ORMAZD, the Spirit of Light, the  
Spirit of Good,  
Their father, glorying in his father-  
hood—  
Maker of Joy, and of all blissful  
things—  
Once, in mid pomp of his world-  
journeyings  
Across the invisible viaducts of  
Space  
That lead from star to star, came face  
to face  
With him from whom all Guilt, all  
Error known,  
All that is misbegotten or misgrown,

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Pain without ease, toil without wage  
or end,

And sin without delight, darkly  
descend :

Him in whom falsehood and curst  
greed began :

Evil's great founder, loveless Ahriman.

For he too had roamed forth that  
day, the sire

Of the world's tears; and bringing  
spectres dire

To attend him, Hates and Lusts of  
every hue,

He, as it chanced, with all his re-  
tinue,

Far roving from his cavernous abode,  
Travelled that selfsame interstellar  
road,

That crosses the calm vasts, and runs  
unseen

Through the hushed voids, and spans  
the deeps serene.

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

A secret highway, it was made of old,  
Long ere the passions of the moon  
were cold,  
Though in no chart of heaven 'tis  
figured yet :  
And on that road the mighty rivals met.

Then did they pause : then did all  
Good and Ill  
Seem for a moment to stand mute and  
still.  
And as a thundercloud, a wandering  
gloom,  
Full of the whirlwind, full of sudden  
doom,  
Might hover, holding back its bolts  
unflung,  
So hovered Ahriman. But apt of  
tongue,  
Quickly he scabbarded fierce hate in  
guile,  
And hailed bright Ormazd : 'Thou  
benignant Smile,

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Mellowing the countenance of Eternity!  
Oft on thy works I gazed: on very  
thee

I gaze at last. O falsely famed to  
dwell

Withdrawn into thy towering citadel  
In most remote austerity of brow!  
Ev'n thus did I, too, image thee ere  
now—

A clifflike, steep Perfection. At this  
hour,

Seeing thee as thou art, in grandest  
power

Accessible as Spring and Morning are,  
I will unlatch my breast, I will unbar  
This heart of mine, I will let leap  
unpent

The Thought that hungered for en-  
franchisement,

Prisoned while many an age hath  
ebbed and gone!

Have I thine ear?' And Ormazd  
said: 'Say on.'

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

So Ahriman, as one that halts no  
more,  
But with large gesture opes a captive's  
door,  
Thus from his bosom set the bound  
thought free :  
' Ormazd the Radiant ! betwixt thee  
and me  
Shared is the world : in its august  
design  
Everything everywhere is thine or  
mine :  
And throned o'er all that can rejoice  
or mourn,  
We are the lords of Life from bourn  
to bourn.  
But so enclasped,—nay, through their  
farthest range  
Knotted together in a knot so strange  
Are our dominions, each with each  
entailed  
Even from the prime ; so twined, so  
intercoiled—

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Locked in a tanglement so hard to  
undo—

So wholly intermingled through and  
through—

Are these our realms ; that nowhere  
within all

Their vastness is one point, however  
small,

One meanest spot, where thou or I can  
say :

*Here have I absolute and plenary sway,  
Complete, unparcelled lordship, king-  
hood whole ;*

*Here do I reign, sovereign, supreme, and  
sole.*

Rather have mutual thwartings long  
made sour

Each cup we drank of ! And is this,  
then, Power—

Can this be rule and governance—to  
bear

Frustration with a meek brow every-  
where,



## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

And unto bafflings without end resign  
A patient breast? For such thy wont,  
and mine.

Ever, O Ormazd, thou art foiled by me ;  
Ever, O Ormazd, I am baulked by  
thee ;

And everywhere in our domains im-  
mense  
Is balanced Might but grandiose im-  
potence.

Behold, then, this my Scheme, in  
silence nursed,  
In secrecy long pondered, and now  
first,  
Under the calm, grave inquest of thine  
eye,  
Bid to stand naked : the one Scheme  
whereby  
Huge discords shall be goldenly re-  
solved,  
And fair and foul cease to be inter-  
volved,

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

While from a heaven uncobwebbed  
- thou shalt see

These ravelled worlds blaze with sim-  
plicity,

The accurst embroilments and rank  
disarray

Wholly thenceforward swept from life  
away.

For now my Scheme, my slow-nurtu d  
Design,

Shall forthwith to that cloudless gaze  
of thine

Be bared. But though it proffers  
wondrous things,

They are no more than rich imaginings

Till thy command shall make them  
truth, and give

The charter that empowers a dream to  
live.

Behold my Project, then ! Let thee  
and me

On a world-boundary now at last  
agree :

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

A barrier, so devised as to extend,  
With neither a beginning nor an end,  
Along a line throughout Creation  
drawn,  
Straight as if Nature's self must then  
be sawn  
In bleeding halves; and let this  
barrier reach—  
Being of impalpable fabric—without  
breach,  
Mid worlds long weary of our clamor-  
ous feud,  
Upward and downward through in-  
finitude,  
Mystically, and therefore, as were meet,  
Invisibly; and when 'tis built com-  
plete,  
All that is on the one side thou shalt  
make  
Thine own for evermore, and I will take  
All that is on the other: and thus  
shall we  
Divide with a Divine equality

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Betwixt us twain from that time forth  
the whole  
Of Being, and equitably allot its  
soul  
And substance, past contention. Then  
must these  
Rangers of heaven, that with proud  
scorn of ease  
In many a wheeling orbit wander  
wide,  
Quit their old paths for ways as yet  
untried,  
If in their courses they would else  
transgress  
That Confine's subtle ethereal fixedness,  
And with disorder beyond remedy  
mar  
Our Scheme. For so must even planet  
and star  
Yield them to change, and to a new-  
framed sky  
Conform, or perish. Meanwhile thou  
and I

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Have but to ordain it, and with lesser  
    sound  
Than of the grass breaking from out  
    the ground  
There shall be fashioned as by secret  
    hands  
That bodiless mystic barrier, till it  
    stands  
Ungross as air and unbeheld as thought,  
Cleaving a universe thenceforth dis-  
    traught  
No more with our hoarse conflicts, no  
    more shamed  
By our crude strifes ; and it shall be  
    proclaimed  
The everlasting bound, that must  
    alone  
Part thy dominions, Ormazd, from  
    mine own.  
On *that* side of the guarded frontier,  
    thine  
Shall be the only law ; on *this* side,  
    mine.

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

And *there* let all Good dwell, thy consort, *here*

All Evil live, my spouse. Then without peer

On that side rule thou changeless, I on this :

And if to wield pure sovereignty be bliss,  
Bliss shalt thou have and hold, there reigning ! Yea,

There for the first time shalt thou truly sway

Thy princedoms, and with hate be hemmed not round,

And with no harassed and mock crown be crowned.

There for the first time since the birth of things,

Or since the blind and thunderous labourings

Of the unborn world to be brought forth at all,

Shalt thou whose lips have tasted but the gall

### THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Of doubtful empire, slake thee with  
delight  
Of perfect puissance, never-threatened  
Might,—  
None to dispute thy throne, nothing  
to gnaw  
At its deep bulwarks,—greatness with-  
out flaw,—  
None to make vain thine acts and  
pluck away  
With midnight hand what thou didst  
plant by day,—  
None to oppose thee, nothing to im-  
pede,  
And thou at last for ever lord indeed.'

He ceased, and looked to Ormazd  
for some sign,  
Legible haply in that brow benign,  
Or those calm eyes. But nothing  
there he read ;  
And the pure lips of Ormazd simply  
said,

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

With suchlike thrift in words as let  
no trace

Of aught that was more inward haunt  
his face :

' What thou proposest I will duly  
weigh,  
And duly shalt thou have my Yea or  
Nay.'

' And who shall bear thy word unto  
mine ear ? '

Said Ahriman ; ' and by what token  
clear

Am I to know him sent indeed from  
thee,

Right across desolate immensity ?

Where in the world-sweep of thy  
boundless ken

Shall I await his coming ? And O  
when

Shall I behold him verily at hand,

With thy great message ? ' 1. 1 did  
Ormazd stand



## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Silent, the monstrous silence of the sky  
Dwarfed by his own. Fathomless was  
his eye,

His face the cloister of his thoughts,  
his head

A still, lone summit. But at length  
he said :

' No messenger shall bear to thee my  
word ;

Only from mine own mouth shall it be  
heard.

Where, dost thou ask ? Here, where  
we parley now,

My tongue shall speak it. When,  
demandest thou ?

A hundred thousand years hence,  
from this hour.'

To Spirits of heavenly or infernal  
power,

Such as in ancientness are Time's own  
peers,

Not longer seem a hundred thousand  
years,

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

With their dim-moving pomps of life  
and death,

Than is to us a moment or a  
breath.

And the dark ancestor of all things  
vile

Being well content to wait so brief a  
while,

The rivals parted, pledged to meet  
once more,

Soon as those few swift ages should be  
o'er.

To Night's blind heart returned the  
Spirit of Ill,

Where gloomed his fastness, whence  
he roams at will

To mar that Good he may not quite  
destroy.

And he who fashioned Morn and  
founded Joy

Betook him to a region of the skies

That from the gaze of men is hidden,  
and lies

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Outside the lore that can bewitch our  
ears

With the proud epic of the stars'  
careers.

There did the heavenly traveller halt ;  
and there,

Seeming to rest upbuilt on golden air,  
Were vast walls, whiter than in storm  
the foam

Round fear-struck ships ; and many a  
lustrous dome

Rose as the curving bosom of the swan  
Above a still lake rises. There, too,  
shone

Turrets that, mounting firelike, seemed  
to be

Ravished and lost in a pure ecstasy,  
So high they flamed ; while near them,  
luminous mist,

Its hues the marriage of the amethyst  
And opal, floated as amid the play  
Of plashing fountains floats the rain-  
bowed spray.

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

And splendour beyond splendour  
towered, yet all  
The glories bounded by that circling wall  
Were one miraculous palace that  
appeared  
As if a wizard of the heavens had  
reared  
Its ageless pomps. Never therein had  
been  
Death, or his shadow; and with  
dazzling sheen,  
Gateways through which no evil thing  
might fare  
Blazed around Ormazd as he entered  
there.  
For this was his far dwelling, which  
decay  
Touched not, and tarnish visited not;  
and they  
Who had kept solemn watch and sleep-  
less ward,  
Flung wide its portals to receive their  
lord.

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Gorgeous the web of wonder that is  
    spun  
Out of the spilth and offcast of the sun ;  
Glorious the tropic noon's unbridled  
    light ;  
Glorious the pageant of the arctic  
    night,  
That for an hour perchance may half  
    console  
The ice-barred voyager hopeless of the  
    Pole.  
But nought are all the splendours  
    Earth hath known,  
To that which shook, from round the  
    blinding throne  
Where Ormazd seated him again on  
    high,  
Tempests of radiance to the burnished  
    sky.

And now unto his presence did he call  
Three lordly minds, illustrious among  
    all

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

That compassed him as with strong  
ramparts : three  
Not far below himself in majesty,  
Rashnu and Vayu and great Mithra, sons  
Of light and might, his seeing and  
judging ones,  
Also his warlike captains from of old :  
To whom he failed not straightway to  
unfold  
Ahriman's Scheme, by which that  
Prince of Pain  
Would carve the labyrinthine world in  
twain,  
Parting, as with a barrier none might  
climb,  
All Evil from all Good throughout all  
time ;  
And Ahriman's whole plea did he  
rehearse  
For such a halving of the universe.  
They harkened, on each word and tone  
intent,  
Standing before him proudly reverent,

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

In silence, till their counsel was be-  
sought,  
When Vayu was the first to unseal his  
thought.

‘ Let me not with a niggard tongue  
refuse ’  
(’Twas thus he spake) ‘ its just, its  
rightful dues  
To this world-spacious world-remould-  
ing Plan,  
Born of the cloud-girt mind of Ahri-  
man.  
Under this Scheme, no more might  
fairest Good,  
From the infecting touch and neigh-  
bourhood  
Of Evil, suffer transformation strange,  
Take Evil’s hues and into Evil  
change ;  
For strict impassable confines being set  
’Twixt these that oft in a fell freedom  
met,

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Such woes would cease for ever. And  
perchance  
Evil itself, lacking the sustenance  
It sucks from Good,—denied its ban-  
quetings  
Mid the lorn ruins of once blissful  
things,—  
Would sicken and fail, pining with  
countenance wan  
For that rich fare it had long feasted  
on.  
But whether Good, shorn of the  
strength it draws  
From hourly battle with Evil's fangs  
and claws,  
And from uncounted clashings, hard  
to endure,  
With the huge monster's dragon  
armature,  
Would flourish or fade, richer or poorer  
grow,  
Rise with new fire, or smoulder lulled  
and low



## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

And in a barren peace at last abide,—  
Of *that*, O Ormazd, thou that stood'st  
    beside  
Time at his cradling must forejudge,  
    not we :  
Thou who didst know from their  
    nativity  
Both Good and Evil, seeing their wars  
    begun,  
And ever won and lost, and lost and  
    won.'

Reverberant, vibrant, nor less broad  
    and deep  
Than the sea's utterance round the  
    cloven steep,  
Was his rich-billowing voice, each  
    cadence grave  
Being like the lapse of a sonorous wave  
When it withdraws down a resounding  
    shore.  
And after his last word, there hovered  
    o'er

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

That council a brief silence, tremulous  
As with expectancy, till Rashnu  
thus

Put it to flight : ' One only thing is  
plain.

Not *our* advantage, not *our* weal or  
gain,

O Ormazd, doth thy foe of foes in-  
tend !

What, then, can be his goal, his secret  
end ?

What lurked behind his specious words,  
when he,

As if by veriest chance encountering  
thee

Amid the heavens, poured forth the  
Scheme which thou

Bid'st us consider ? Is it that he  
now

Foresees his empire slowly dwindling,  
thine

Greatening, and seeks to avert by this  
design

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

That gradual droop of power, that  
piecemeal fall,  
And long, inglorious fading, which of all  
Dreary vicissitude is the dreariest  
known,  
To one that sits upon a haughty  
throne ?'

So asked the noon-bright Spirit,  
and when he ceased  
To speak, although no tongue replied,  
at least  
Faces made answer ; and in speech to  
the eye  
His fellow counsellors there standing  
nigh  
Uttered what seemed not an uncertain  
Yea.  
Then spake outright the lordliest child  
of day ;  
He in whom met, and nobly did agree,  
Resplendent strength and mastering  
suavity ;

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

He at whose footfall, when he roamed  
abroad,  
The heavens themselves were stilled  
and hushed and awed,  
Hearing the golden thunder of his tread;  
Great Mithra. 'First, let me declare,'  
he said,  
'How full, how perfect is mine own  
assent  
To all that hath from lips more  
eloquent  
Most justly flowed. Like Vayu, loth  
am I  
With a mean stint to grudge and half  
deny  
Fit and due praise to a Project, to a  
Scheme,  
Which, were it proved but a vain-  
built dream,  
Would none the less reveal, if nought  
beside,  
A dauntless Dreamer : being a vision  
wide

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

As the mind's farthest outstretch :  
    wanting not  
Its lures, its beckon, its promises of  
    what  
Ev'n the all-coveting hand of Hope  
    might well  
Have lacked the greed to crave. But  
    truth to tell,  
I also must like Rashnu cry Beware !  
For it is warrior's wisdom, when-  
    soe'er  
A foe seems friendliest, to set double  
    guard,  
And at an enemy's gift look long and  
    hard.  
Now 'tis exceeding sure, that till we  
    know  
Whether thyself, O Ormazd, or thy  
    foe  
Already wield o'er life the ampler  
    power,  
And in these clangorous worlds at  
    each loud hour

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Already govern the more vast domain,  
We know not whether 'twere thy loss  
or gain

To embrace a Project, fix and ratify  
Beyond revokement a Design, whereby  
The Dark One would in breadth of  
empire be

Thy changeless Equal everlastingly,  
And thine own puissance an arrested  
tide,

Standing magnificently petrified.

Send therefore to each haunt and  
dwelling-place

Of Mind—each tenanted orb that rides  
in Space—

Each populous busy star that sails  
upbuoyed,

Eager and ardent on the torpid  
Void—

Send to all seats of life, and through  
the whole

Compass and circuit of that world of  
soul

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

That in a fast enmeshment without  
end  
Deep amidst worlds of clay is woven—  
send  
Unseen and noiseless watchers,  
searchers, spies,  
A myriad listening ears and probing  
eyes,  
And bid them bring thee word from  
everywhere  
Of how thine enemy's strength and  
thine compare ;  
In what sphere *thou* prevailest ; in  
what zone  
And tract of Being *his* might o'ertops  
thine own ;  
What wavering region of vext ebb  
and flow  
Now hails *thee* paramount and anon  
thy foe.  
In brief, from wheresoever living  
thing  
Abides, let thine intelligencers bring

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Knowledge that, summed into one  
boundless ray,  
Shall show forth clear how thou dost  
stand to-day,  
Measured against thine adversary;  
and so,  
In that enormous torchflare, we shall  
know  
Whether 'twill profit *thee* or him alone,  
Who at the heart of darkness hath his  
throne,  
If thou, unto his Scheme consenting,  
cast  
Off and make null and quite tread out  
the Past,  
Bartering this variable and fluctuant  
sway—  
Surge and subsidence, crescence and  
decay—  
For an unchanging Realm, within  
whose pale  
Nowhere shalt thou have reason to  
bewail



## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Evil triumphant, and its arms made  
proud  
With trophy and spoil; or to rejoice  
aloud  
At its abjection, and its flight in fear  
Before the gleaming of a dawn-tipt  
spear.'

Such were his words; and now, in  
speech that fell  
From where no shadow of untruth  
might dwell,  
Ormazd's elect and faithful had out-  
poured  
Freely their thought, which in their  
breasts to hoard  
Had been ignoblest service; and the  
three,  
For their oft-proved and spotless fealty,  
Received the thanks of that enthroned  
and crowned  
Benignance. Then, from where the  
glory around

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

His presence like the soul of dayspring  
burned,  
They to a thousand radiant tasks re-  
turned.

And Ormazd did as Mithra coun-  
selled. First  
Recalling hosts that had been long  
dispersed  
On divers errands, diligent spirits and  
true,  
He formed them into bands and squad-  
rons new,  
And with new mandate sent them  
everywhere  
Among the speedful, spurring worlds ;  
and there,  
Wherever the dim lifeseed had been  
sown  
In quickened soil, or on waste foam or  
stone ;

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Wherever aught had breath, and did  
    beget  
Offspring, and wither and die; and  
    chiefliest yet,  
Wherever creatures born, not quite in  
    vain,  
To a broad estate of pleasure and of  
    pain,  
Large hereditaments of bliss and  
    woe—  
Wherever such a race, emerging  
    slow,  
Had risen in honour and shame and  
    love and lust  
Out of the pregnant and parturient  
    dust,  
There did those secret emissaries en-  
    gage  
In a profound, a solemn espionage.  
None saw them; yet among the quick  
    and dead  
Daily they moved, with a reposeless  
    tread,

### THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

And they became a presence inter-  
wreathed  
With all that was ; by everything that  
breathed  
Felt like a vague commotion, like a  
breeze  
Furtive in underwoods where forest  
trees  
Stand pensive. And with questing  
eyes and ears  
They, traversing the divers peopled  
spheres,  
Passed to and fro ; the mortals dwell-  
ing there  
Being oft obscurely on a sudden  
aware  
Of something which had opened not  
their doors,  
And had no step that sounded on their  
floors,  
But fainter than a rustle or a sigh  
Had glided in, and like a waft gone  
by.

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

And ages came and went, with pause-  
less pace  
And trampling on sweep, till the very  
face  
Of heaven was here and there by slow  
degrees  
Being changed ! Young planets, the  
shy novices  
Of Night, appeared beside old palsied  
ones,  
Their joyless kin ; while certain fervid  
suns  
Grew senile, and with no more force  
to spend  
Doted decrepit, nearing their lone  
end :  
And sometimes, as from fires that  
blanch and char,  
There fell the ashes of a ruined star.  
And still did the unslumbering  
searchers ply  
Their task ; and not till they had  
heard pass by,

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Mid voices as of cloud-clad chariot-  
eers,

The thunderous wheels of ninety  
thousand years,

Did they return, and unto Ormazd  
bring

The heaped fruit of their worldwide  
harvesting.

Then came the lesser, lighter labour  
—though

This, too, was a prodigious toil—of so  
Ordering and setting forth in due  
array

The piled and boundless-seeming  
knowledge they

Had reaped, that Ormazd at a glance  
might see

The range and scope of his own  
sovereignty,

Measured against the empire of his foe.

And many an age had yet to come and

go,

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

That as it fleded found that toil's last  
stage  
Still distant : many a shadowy-trail-  
ing age,  
When Man may in his long slow dawn  
have been,  
And round him forms that mid this  
haunt terrene  
Succeeded stranger shapes, once mon-  
strously  
Got of the dalliance of the Earth and Sea.  
But the huge labours were at length  
complete ;  
The garnered knowledge was in order  
meet  
Ranged and disposed ; the task was  
perfected ;  
And Ormazd, seeing as in a chart  
outspread  
His own and his fell rival's power,  
could view  
These with exactness, and now verily  
knew

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Which was the greater: whereupon  
he cast  
Falterings behind him, and stood  
founded fast  
In a resolve that might not change or  
fade,  
Touching the answer that must soon  
be made,  
At the appointed place and destined  
day,  
To Ahriman—the doomful Yea or Nay.

For now that day drew near, and  
peaklike rose  
Out of the plains of time—the day  
when those  
First mighty forefathers of Good and Ill  
Must indeed meet once more, and so  
fulfil  
Their mutual pledge, or both for ever  
stand  
Alike forsworn. And ere it loomed at  
hand,



## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Ormazd together called, besides the  
Three  
Nighest himself in splendour and  
majesty,  
Thrice three of less renown ; and on  
each one  
Bestowing words of cheer and benison,  
He to the twelve made known his  
whole intent.  
And at a sign they left him, and he  
went  
From out his lofty-towered abiding-  
place,  
And he looked down o'er the abysm of  
Space,  
He whom its deeps were powerless to  
appal.  
O'er Nothingness, most awesome thing  
of all,  
There looked he down ; and halted on  
its verge,  
Somewhat as on a rock above the  
surge

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

A fearless swimmer a moment halts,  
ere he  
With headlong leap commits him to  
the sea.  
Then from the towers and courts and  
domes that glowed  
Around his innermost divine abode—  
The outskirts of that Light which was  
his throne—  
Ormazd upon the skies went forth  
alone,  
There, for the second time, and for  
the last,  
To meet the Saddener of the World.  
He passed  
By many a massy star, matched with  
whose girth  
Puny indeed were this our boastful  
Earth,  
And onward without tarrying or de-  
lay,  
Right across many a planet's ancient  
way,

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

His own being no such curving course,  
he fared.

The ever fevered comet as it  
flared

With violent inroad through the  
heavens, and raced

Athwart Creation, he that knew not  
haste

Serenely in its hot flight overtook  
And far outsped. As one that fords  
a brook

In a mere journey o'er vale and wold,  
he crossed

The madding meteor torrent, that  
seemed lost

And aimless, doomed to chase in  
dizzy sky

Its own self round the sun. At times  
his eye

Saw War beside his pathway, cosmic  
strife

As of a new world crashing into  
life

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Through welter and rage and the loud  
splintering  
Of old worlds' bones. But oft, where  
breathing thing  
Or living voice had never sought to  
intrude  
On the cold, blank, tremendous  
quietude,  
He swept through utter Calms that  
well might be  
Likened to the immense serenity  
And infinite composure of the dead :  
Kingdoms that Silence hath inherited  
From Silence ; and mid these he came  
to where  
His adversary awaited him, for there,  
True to the hour and to the place of tryst,  
Was Ahriman, his dread antagonist.

And Ormazd with a soaring voice  
cried : ' Lo,  
I am come to pay thee that which I do  
owe—

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Gratitude, gratitude!' A joyful  
gleam

Lit the drear face of Evil. 'Then my  
Scheme

Hath in thine eyes found favour?'  
But full soon

The gleam departed, Ormazd saying :  
'The boon

For which I thank thee and could  
almost bless

The giver of a gift so measureless,  
Is the new knowledge, full and sure, of  
how

Thy power and mine compare, and  
whether thou

Or I be mightier. Unto thee my  
debt

Is boundless : without *thee*, not even  
yet

That knowledge had been mine, and  
thou hast well

Earned richest thanks.' Ahriman's  
countenance fell.

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

' I knew that thou hadst sent forth  
everywhere  
Thy searchers, gatherers, scouts, and  
spies, and ne'er  
Sought I to foil their quest, nor once  
have laid  
Across their path a hindrance.' Or-  
mazd paid  
No heed, but unregardful thus spake  
on :  
' O oft did I in yonder ages gone  
Toil with misgiving and with doubt,  
nor knew  
Whether 'twas mine own realm or  
thine that grew  
In lasting spaciousness, or whether  
both  
Stood without movement, without  
change or growth,  
Or rise or fall. And ever labouring  
still,  
I was as one that climbs an endless  
hill,

### THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

And oft I bore a heavy, a secret  
load,

And lacked the joy that I myself be-  
stowed.

But now I know that when thou met'st  
me first,

Thinking to snare me with thy guile  
accurst,

Already had thy feet begun to slide  
Ev'n then from power. Already had  
the tide

Against thee turned : thenceforth the  
flow was mine,

Thine the loathed ebb. And though  
thy sure decline

Was hardly as yet a thing to itself  
confessed,

Already somewhat below peak and  
crest

Thou stood'st, and wert each morrow  
fall'n away

A little—a little—from height of yester-  
day.'

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

'Thy words are false,' cried Ahri-  
man, 'and thou  
Erelong shalt learn that never even  
now  
Have I put forth the full might of  
mine arm  
Against thee; and with tremors of  
alarm  
Shalt thou look on hereafter, while I  
sow  
With dreadful largesse the long-  
hoarded woe.  
For whatsoever thou dost most  
abhor—  
Famine and pestilence and hate and  
war,  
And new-minted diseases worse than  
death—  
These in thrice ampler bounty with my  
breath  
Will I strew wide, wherever mortals  
live  
Their life fantastical and fugitive.'



## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

'And from all this,' said Ormazd,  
'shall pure fruit  
Upprow, and odorously will I trans-  
mute  
To loveliest bloom thy gifts of deadliest  
bane.  
For now henceforth I wax and thou  
dost wane,  
I broaden and thou shrinkest; and at  
length,  
With ever leaping heart and freshening  
strength,  
Joyous I toil, knowing that day by  
day  
Somewhat art thou for ever feebler;  
yea,  
Knowing as happiest truth that ev'n  
were I  
Not indestructible, but born to die  
Like Gods that palely perish, making  
room  
For younger Gods,—that ev'n were it  
my doom

### THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Thus at the feet of conquering Death  
to bow,  
And my chief tasks yet unperformed,  
and thou  
Neither destroyed nor vanquished,—  
none the less  
Stablisht secure in everlastingness  
Were this my kingdom, my fair realm  
of Good ;  
But thine own realm of Evil, that  
withstood  
So long my assault, and seemed in  
glory and state  
Built above dread of fall, shall soon  
or late  
With pangs of ebbing power, with  
shudderings vast,  
Be o'ertaken and amazed ; and haply  
at last  
It shall be broken asunder in ruin  
extreme,  
Scattered as shards and the ashes of a  
dream,

## THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

And thou, or some like heritor of thy  
throne,  
Under its mountainous dust lie hurled  
and prone.'

So Ormazd spake. But his terrific  
foe  
In boundless rage was silent, and as  
though  
Somewhat abashed by that pure  
strength and grace,  
Did turn away the tempest of his  
face.  
Out of him rose a twilight dim and  
dire,  
The clouds and column'd vapours of  
his ire  
Spreading their dusk afar. Half hid  
with these  
He stood, while, swirled as in mad  
vortices  
Above him, an innumerable swarm  
Of horrors without lineament or form

### THE SUPERHUMAN ANTAGONISTS

Circled aloft and blindly eddying spun,  
Black as a flight of crows against the  
sun.

And he, by that foul brood attended,  
passed

Downward through skies that his  
mere frown o'ercast,

Betaking him in fury and in shame

Back to those holds of midnight  
whence he came.

**OTHER POEMS**



## AMERICANS, HAIL !

FRANK offspring of that all-adventur-  
ing land,  
Where, in the petty fray of Lexington,  
Thrice fifty summers down the wond-  
rous Past,  
Began no less a duel than of Night  
And Morning, that was world-watched  
eight loud years,  
Till Morning triumphed, and the  
watchers knew  
America's soil and soul for ever free :  
O if you fight as well upon our side  
As once you fought against us, how  
can then  
This cause, which is your own and  
ours and Man's,  
Do aught but conquer ? You are  
come to us  
Full of the strong wine of your Western  
air,

## AMERICANS, HAIL !

Full of the marrow and the sap of  
life,

Full of the tingle of youth and maiden  
valour.

You come as Spring comes to the  
winter fields

When she has hovered long betwixt  
' I will '

And many a coy ' I will not ' ; for  
even so

You hovered, halting betwixt ' Yea '  
and ' Nay '—

Then thundered ' Yea ' and hurled  
your doubts afar.

And not more beautiful upon the  
mountains

Were ever yet the feet of him that  
brought

Glad tidings, than your prows upon  
the sea.

Fresh and untired, you find this  
host of ours



AMERICANS, HAIL !

Worn with the burden and stress of  
fight and toil :  
A host, though but of yesterday's  
begetting,  
Already, in blind, deaf hurricane of  
battle,  
Neither ill tried nor proven an ill match  
For foes that in their nursery lisped of  
arms :  
A host proud of your great copartner-  
ship,  
Proud of their strong new brothers in  
the sword—  
That just, that holy, that benignant  
sword  
Whose purpose and whose goal are  
peace : a host  
Famously captained by such chiefs of  
war  
As well might seem the very topmost  
reach  
Of God's own happy art in making  
men.

## AMERICANS, HAIL !

And yet, not to the heroes, fighting  
there  
On strangers' soil—or underneath it  
laid—  
Not to the brave that face yon storms  
of fire,  
Be all the laurel, all the glory and  
praise !  
Here, too, is greatness ; here are heads  
grown grey  
In council, not yet dreaming of repose ;  
Here are the athletes of debate, and  
here  
The brains that are the lamps without  
whose light  
Armies would grope and stumble, and  
noblest prowess  
With a waste splendour dazzle a fruit-  
less field.  
Here also, his hot thirst for toil un-  
slaked,  
The sinews of his lithe mind unre-  
laxed,

## AMERICANS, HAIL!

Is he, our Empire's leader : he who  
set  
The wheels of the machine of victory  
Whirring and spinning throughout all  
this isle,  
Till Britain hummed as one great mill  
of war :  
A man, no wraith or shadow ; a live  
man,  
Loathed by the spectres and the  
counterfeits ;  
A man as human as your Lincoln was,  
Not muffled up in formula and phrase,  
With palisaded spirit, but giving us  
Access and entrance to his hopes and  
fears,  
And in companionship of glorious  
hazard  
Bearing us with him, while he treads  
a road  
Built like a causeway across flaming  
Hell ;  
Himself a flame of ardour and resolve,

## AMERICANS, HAIL !

Beset by all the tempests, but un-  
quenched,  
Being used to blasts, and native to the  
storm,  
And thriving on the thunder from his  
prime.

Ours were the shame, if having such  
a leader  
We proved unworthy at last to be so  
led,  
And lowered the flag of an unshaken  
will,  
And stooped our soul to a stature and  
a posture  
Like theirs who preach a base truck  
with the foe ;  
Theirs who desire not to see wicked-  
ness  
Caught in the noose of its own vile  
intent,  
But hunger for that evil thing, a pact  
With evil, nay, a bargain with this pit

## AMERICANS, HAIL !

That vomiting all putrescence has  
o'erflowed  
On the sweet earth, a treaty with this  
slime ;  
Who ask that we betray the spirit of  
man,  
Defraud the world that looked to you  
and us  
As guardians of its inward patrimony,  
And co-trustees of its estate of freedom.  
From all such grovelling counsellors,  
and from  
The craven mood that in a puissant  
people  
Were the calamity of calamities  
And the one desperate ill, a people  
itself  
Must be its own sole saviour. But O  
friends,  
'Twixt whom and us the dark, cold,  
salt partitions  
Avail not now to intercept the heart,  
We have an enemy that amid the once

## AMERICANS, HAIL !

Glad vineyards, orchards, and dear  
meads of life

Hews at the root of all on earth that  
flowered !

It flowers no more, for has not he been  
by ?

He found us drowsed and half un-  
sentinelled,

Half unaccoutred and unpanoplied,  
Lapt in a human trust of human-  
kind

And dreaming that himself was human  
too.

Fatal, befooling dream ! He spoke  
indeed

With human organs, gave forth human  
sounds,

Made human gestures, and his melo-  
dists

Had fashioned heretofore high human  
music,

None fairer and none nobler, and his  
poets

**AMERICANS, HAIL !**

Had thrilled the world with his per-  
human song ;

But all his later study and care had  
been

To rip from his own breast the human  
heart.

And, having rid him of so vain a thing,  
To found upon the hideous ghastly  
void

The edifice of his thoughts, deeds, and  
desires ;

As if upon a hollow and a want  
There could arise aught 'stablish't to  
endure.

And this, this was not all ! For where  
his heart

Had suffered dread erasure, demons  
found

Befitting residence and domicile,  
And made that cavern in his breast  
their home.

Yonder they camp, thence do they  
sally abroad,

**AMERICANS, HAIL !**

And thither from fell foray they return.  
These, his foul tenants, these no arms  
can slay,  
Theirs being a monstrous immortality;  
But he o'erthrown, their fort and  
citadel  
Were fall'n, and lacking that secure  
retreat  
These Terrors would be terrible no  
more.  
This, then, O friends and mighty  
aiders, this  
Must be your task and ours : to level  
with earth  
That fort, that citadel, that hold  
itself,  
Where all the trooping fiends find  
harbourage  
And trysting-place, and couch and  
kennel, and whence  
In the aghasted eye of the sick day  
They make infernal sortie. More than  
this



**AMERICANS, HAIL !**

No league of Man can compass : less  
than this  
Would, for ourselves or for our woeful  
heirs,  
Be but damnation a brief while de-  
ferred,  
At best a little putting off of fate,  
At best a little miserable ease,  
And then the paying of all the arrears  
of doom,  
Vouched in remorseless audit ; then  
indeed  
Ruin and perdition and a world un-  
done.

In that belief, you and ourselves  
await,  
With hope that cannot wholly van-  
quish fear,  
The veiled, tremendous morrow ; and  
yonder stands  
Your Nation, watching o'er the sea  
her sons ;

## AMERICANS, HAIL !

A Nation whence, as from an orchestra  
Suavely controlled, there rises goldenly  
Though sternly, with far surge and  
tidal swell,

Not without sad and wailful underflow,  
But mighty in neave of sound, all  
dissonance hushed,

A new Heroic Symphony of war ;  
Heard throughout Earth with a grave  
thankfulness

By such as love great music ; and per-  
haps

Ev'n on an ear divine not wholly lost,  
Not utterly unacceptable to Heaven.

*December 1917.*

## THE UNRECONCILED

### I

IN a crease of the forehead of Antrim,  
where Time has written on stone  
The tale of the endless debate of the  
obstinate land and sea—  
Those heirs of magnificent discord,  
that just for a season agree  
To compose their thunderous quarrel,  
but ever at heart are prone  
To harp on it night and day in a  
moody undertone,  
And presently mutter a word that is  
dark with wrath and bale,  
And rouse from counterfeit sleep their  
feil vendetta, and so  
Return to the naked hate they were  
born in long ago,

## THE UNRECONCILED

Reopen the wrangle of ages, resume  
the dear dispute,  
The controversy eternal that bears but  
death for fruit,  
As well from of old these haughty, im-  
placable brawlers know ;—  
In a crease of the forehead of Antrim,  
where Time has written that  
tale,  
I have found me a place that surely is  
musing on ancient woe,  
And remembers in dreams the tread of  
the midnight foot of Doom :  
A place where even the candours of  
noon seem sinister things :  
And there I have heard the ocean  
recitative roll and boom,  
The monotonous ocean soliloquy  
rumble morose and low ;  
The obscure beginning of storm, like a  
rustle of huddled wings ;  
The stroke of the great sea-hammer,  
awaking with blow on blow

## THE UNRECONCILED

In the cavernous land such outcry as  
iron from iron wrings ;  
The clang of the shock of the waters  
that butted with taurine roar  
Against fallen Dunseveric, once the  
abode of vengeful Kings ;  
And the blind, mad panic in heaven  
when eastward the hurricane tore  
By the marge where lorn Templastra  
dejected ponders, and o'er  
That fantasy, wild Ballintoy, on the  
steeps in the lee of Bengore.

### II

And listening there to the sound of  
contention fierce, that began  
'Mid the Earth's primeval travail, ere  
God had dreamed of Man—  
Contention ordained to abide when  
Man within dust and stone  
Shall haply have been forgotten by all  
but God alone—

### THE UNRECONCILED

I have heard, as a thing far off, the  
voice that is yet as nigh  
As the duel of land and sea, beneath  
the impartial sky ;  
A richer voice than theirs, and of deep,  
all-human tone ;  
Pulsating, vibrating, plangent, a voice  
we dare not fly :  
The voice of Ireland's self, for ever  
about our door ;  
The voice that beats as a billow on us  
that are the shore.

### III

O Ireland, easeless Ireland, how oft  
like yonder tide  
Thy soul has arisen, all foam, to break  
on the crags in spray !  
And ever the crags endured, and the  
bright spray gleaming died,  
And ever as brief iridescence did  
Fortune glimmer away.

## THE UNRECONCILED

But to-day shall it still be the  
same? Thy heart's abounding  
dower

And the wealth of thy spirit, are  
these to be spent like a thunder  
shower?

Behold, after weary ages of fever and  
barren pain,

A cause that is worth thy passion, a  
sword that deserves thy hand!

O take them and make them thine.  
'Tis the world's transcendent  
hour.

'Tis the day of the falling of barriers,  
and out on the western main

The interdicts of Ocean themselves are  
annulled and vain,

For the daughter of many races, that  
long was wont to tower

As the great lone Alp among nations,  
serene in mateless power,

At last, her human bosom prevailing,  
comes to stand

## THE UNRECONCILED

With her kindred, side by side, with  
her lovers, heart by heart ;  
And is it thy choice at this hour to  
hold thee coldly apart,  
To watch from without in the time of  
the leaping of chasms unspanned,  
When glimpsed amid clouds are the  
ways of the World-Deviser, who  
planned  
How Good shall be born of Evil and  
suckled on Evil's breast—  
In the time of the drawing together of  
continents, east and west,  
In the morn of the stormy bridal of  
far-cleft land and land,  
When the hemispheres brook no longer  
their soulless bars unblest ?

### IV

Ah, words without hope of fruitage,  
like seed on the breakers flung !  
But at least I have told my thought, in  
faithful if idle speech,



## THE UNRECONCILED

That comes not of rage or hatred, and  
only of love is sprung.

And now I will hold my peace, I will  
husband now my tongue,

I will learn of whatever is voiceless  
whatever it has to teach.

The spent tide flags and recoils. Like  
gifts unused and waste

Is the many-tinted seaweed that strews  
the Atlantic beach.

I will climb the track to westward,  
where bards of old have paced,

Whose songs are asleep by cromlech  
and cairn and haunted mound.

I will follow the path that leads  
to the Way of the Giants,  
around

By the Amphitheatre vast, with its  
tiers of cliff, where rise

The column'd shafts of basalt like  
organ-pipes to the skies,

Outrolling a fugal silence, involved,  
impassioned, profound.

## THE UNRECONCILED

'Tis the path that gropes and crawls  
on the lean rock's wasted side,  
Where nightly the Giant's Loom by  
invisible hands is plied.  
And east and west are the caverns,  
their dark roofs arched and  
groined,  
The chambers and vaulted dungeons  
and monstrous crypts of the sea :  
And pillars, fallen and prostrate, from  
mighty façades disjoined—  
Released, but in utter abjection, un-  
bound, but vainly free ;  
And desolate ruined holds of many a  
chief and King ;  
And the mastersong of disunion that  
earth and ocean sing ;  
And large and bold on the headlands  
the manuscript of Time ;  
And coiled with the roots of the world,  
where Life thrusts up like a tree,  
The Powers that rive and sunder, un-  
moved by appeal or plea ;

## THE UNRECONCILED

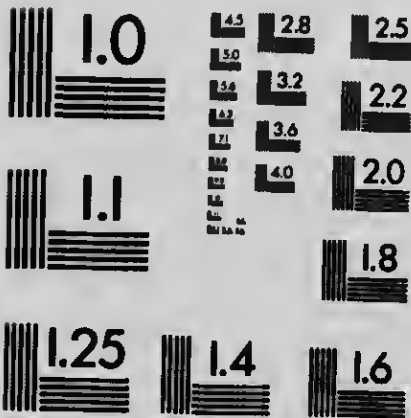
The Powers that shatter with discord  
what else were a golden chime ;  
The Estrangeing Ones, the dividers,  
the hewers in twain from the  
prime ;  
The Unmakers and Destroyers, what-  
ever their names may be.

*September 1917.*



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## THE FORESIGHT OF THE BLIND

THE great, strange, conquering legends  
    puissant still  
As in the Middle Age whence they  
    arose,  
Which are they? Sovereign above  
    all are those  
Of Faust's dread bargain with the  
    Spirit of Ill,  
And of that Knight who, taking long  
    his fill  
Of bliss with Venus, earned him longer  
    woes !  
And from the Kingdom of our living  
    foes  
Came both these dreams, mighty to  
    haunt and thrill,  
*And each the tale of a lost soul: as*  
    *though*

## THE FORESIGHT OF THE BLIND

Germania unawares had prophesied  
Of her own state and fate on Earth,  
    that sees,  
Dark with self-doom, against a fiery  
    glow,  
The lost soul of a nation, wandering  
    wide  
Like lone Ahasuerus, without ease.

*February 1918.*

SONG  
THE WARRIOR LOVER

WHEN War's red tempest shall depart,  
That long hath sundered me  
From those sweet precincts of thy  
heart

And all that heaven of thee ;  
If I return from where they rest  
Whom battle's scythe hath mown,  
Then in the fragrance of thy breast  
I 'll live for love alone.

But if, where warstorms wildest roll,  
My life for *her* I yield—  
That other empress of my soul,  
Who called me to the field—  
Though 'twixt you twain, with dying  
breath,

My homage I 'll divide,  
My heart will turn to thee in death,  
To claim and clasp its bride.



**BEHOLD !**

O THOU that with a signal canst control

All seas that roll ;

O Thou that with a whisper canst assuage

All winds that rage :

Behold how softer than the human breast

The wild bird's nest !

Behold how calmer than the world of men

The wild beast's den !

*March 1918.*

## TO CERTAIN NEBULAE

PLANET and star, and the glory of  
ancient constellations,  
These have surfeit of homage, in songs  
of a thousand singers :  
You, O Nebulae, still, as of old, dwell  
yonder songless ;  
One in Orion's sword-hilt, one in  
Andromeda's girdle,  
One like shadowy foam, where sails  
a fantastical Argo.  
You, mid Arabian cities, and proud  
Chaldea, and Egypt,  
Mighty astronomers, slowly decipher-  
ing Heaven's papyrus,  
Oft, no doubt, have watched, in a  
world all colour and fruitage,  
Balsam, sultry aroma, and odorous  
vivid abundance,

## TO CERTAIN NEBULAE

Palm, oleander and cedar, acanthus  
and lotus and laurel,  
Foliage, vintage, plumage, honey, and  
delicate unguents,  
Attar and spices and myrrh. And in  
many a nearer region  
Many a wandering gaze hath known  
your places of ambush,  
High above dreams, above tears!  
But never a golden greeting  
Thither ascends, through space,  
through coldly inhuman vast-  
ness,  
Out of the mouth of a poet, in magical  
human numbers.  
You, then, far across night, and im-  
mense, magnificent silence,  
Intricate cosmic coil, and the nodes of  
entangled orbits,  
Let me salute, O pallid, unsplendid  
things, amid splendour  
Hovering ever obscure, amid prideful  
lustre unprideful :

TO CERTAIN NEBULAE

You that to vague, light ken seem only  
as bodiless auras,  
Breath of a hundred stars ; but rather  
appear unto wisdom  
Fringes and shreds of the Veil, through  
which, at the Earth's great  
moments,  
Flashes of God break forth, in the hour  
of the smiting of Evil ;  
Day of the clang of the axe upon trees  
that bore but poison ;  
Day of the mortal throes of iniquitous  
perishing empires ;  
When, upon brows discrowned, the  
erasing extinguishing thunders  
Fall, and the throne of the cruel is  
tossed as a leaf in the whirlwind.

*November 1918.*

## VERSES

TO HENRY C. MONTGOMERY, ESQ.,  
OF BELFAST. WRITTEN NEAR  
WINDERMERE.

Good friend and true, who, for the  
gifts and knowledge  
That stead you well amid the clang  
and strife,  
Are less in debt to yonder younger  
College  
Than to the University of Life :

Take, at this time that opens the  
heart's fountains,  
Take, at this Yuletide, from across  
the seas,  
The greetings of the meres and of the  
mountains,  
And of your friends who are the  
guests of these.

VERSES TO H. C. MONTGOMERY, ESQ.

Nay, ere my rhyme, that must not  
halt or tarry,  
Flits through the snowstorm like a  
battered dove,  
My little firstborn daughter bids it carry,  
To her big, bearded playfellow, her  
love.

Wild roars the blizzard. Wilder tem-  
pest rages  
In Man's fierce breast, and hides  
from the world's eye  
The truth-tellers and light-givers and  
sages  
That live when hatred and when  
fury die.

In this ill day, what good wish shall I  
send you ?  
Vain, when our fate yet hangs in  
quivering doubt,  
To ask that all felicity attend you,  
And bid you to forget the woe without!

**VERSES TO H. C. MONTGOMERY, ESQ.**

I can but pray that in some happier  
morrow,

You, and we also, gazing from afar,  
May look back on this vast, life-blind-  
ing sorrow

As on the occultation of a star,—

A fixed star, briefly hidden by the  
passing

Of a reposeless orb of bloodred glow :  
Then bursting forth, where Night's  
bright hosts were massing,

To pour its glory undimmed, as long  
ago.

*Christmas 1917.*

## THE SCROLL OF LIFE

LIFE seems a scroll, not so much darkly  
writ  
As ill transcribed ; and he who pores  
on it  
Must, like a painful scholiast, thread  
perplex  
The thorny thicket of a mangled text.

But with it wov'n is many a quoted  
line,—  
The cryptic prose breaks into verse  
divine ;  
And in strange wafts the painful  
scholiast hears  
Hexameters of the Iliad of the Spheres.



## POWER AND CHARM

A cot was ours, lone on a wooded fell  
That gazed into a fairy mere renowned.  
Dark mountains on our right hand  
    camped around ;

Green, on our left, were copse and  
    ferny d' ll.

Thus betwixt Power and Charm we  
    abode ; and well

Loved we the brows of Power, with  
    silence crowned ;

Yet many a time, when awsomey  
    they frowned,

To Charm we turned, with Charm,  
    with Charm to dwell.

So have I turned, when overbrooded  
    long

By that great star-familiar peak  
    austere,

POWER AND CHARM

My Milton's Sinai-Helicon divine,  
To some far earthlier singer's earth-  
sweet song :

A song frail as the windflower, and as  
dear,

With no more purpose than the  
eglantine.

h-  
as  
ie

## THE INNERMOST CAVERN

THE unsailed, the unentered cavern,  
The still ungazed upon !  
No light but the sea-phosphorescence  
Amidst its night hath shone.

Then only it wakes from slumber,  
Whenever the visiting gleam  
Of the fairy fire of the Ocean  
Illumes its secret dream.

For it dreams of space without con-  
fines,  
Of vastness around and above ;  
And it waits like the heart of a maiden,  
That waits to be lit by love.

## TOIL

LIFE is a workshop and a temple as  
well,

Where the great toilers—so their annals  
tell—

To Justice, Truth, and Love paid  
worship, knowing

Life was a workshop and a temple as  
well.

Life is a workshop and a palace  
both.

Nature, that ever labours without  
sloth,

Nature herself in beauty and grace  
hath taught us

Life is a workshop and a palace  
both.

## TOIL

O be it ours, while hate and feud are  
rife,

To keep far off from this our land the  
strife

That yonder makes a wreck of Man's  
own dwelling,

His wondrous workshop, temple and  
palace, Life.

## THE EARTH'S DESIRE

WHEN a sigh as of abdication is wrung  
from lordly things  
By the rumour of crumbling pride that  
the eve of autumn brings ;

When the troubled splendours come,  
and the glad perfections go,  
Amid flitting of vagabond tempest  
irresolute to and fro ;

' Ask, ask thou a boon,' say the Hea-  
vens to the wistful Earth ; but  
in vain

She asks for the bliss of the Rose, and  
the pomp of the Nightingale's  
pain.

## WHITHER AFAR ?

IN light, in night, in twilight,  
I sought—I sought for Thee !  
But *my* light, was it *Thy* light ?  
I sought, and nought could see.

I strove by inward eyesight  
To gaze on things to be :  
But *my* sight, was it *Thy* sight ?  
I gazed, and nought could see.

Along Thy starlit highway  
Thou lead'st me, bound or free !  
If *my* way, then, be *Thy* way,  
O whither lead'st Thou me ?

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