

Visions

By Ian B. Stoughton Holborn

All in a fairyland of silvern haze
Dream-fancies hover in the quivering air,
Some dim and dark in close secluded ways,
Some glowing warm amid the noontide blaze,
But glamorous all, enticing to despair.

Black cliffs and castled heights rise vast and sheer,
And round their base in thunder rolls the sea,
While, through the mist, strange phantoms and austere,
Fantastic, fill the trembling atmosphere
With whispering words for me.

Or lovely maidens, delicately white,
And boys fair-wrought, with joyous feet and swift,
In one enchanted dance of shimmering light,
Passing all splendour vouched to mortal sight,
'Mid golden vapours ravishingly drift.

And amaranth flower and deathly asphodel,
Lotus and lily, countless blooms unnamed,
Pervade my senses as some mystic spell,
Where wild entrancing beauties ever dwell
In purity white-flamed.

While, clad in quiet passion and regret,
I sit and gaze 'neath overshadowed brow,
And finger round my neck the carcanet,
With mystic mirrors in each jewel set,
That flash the ancient glory even now.

In one vast pageant of stupendous things,
Beyond all else, doth Hellas draw my soul,—
The strains that Orpheus or Apollo sings,
Or Eros' fragrant lips and flaming wings
And burning aureole.

And Helen's self looks up to me and smiles,
More beautiful than even Homer sang,
Or Nausikaä's rippling laugh beguiles,
With yet more winning music and soft wiles
Than melodies of old time ever rang.

Dreams, as the artist drew them long ago,
They all alike in gleam or gloom outvie;
With wonders, such as these my visions know,
The poet's pages never yet did glow
Under the olden sky.

But, as I write, so cold they grow and dead,
As hollow ghosts of some exultant time;
My halting fingers spoil the magic thread,
And weave a pale reflection in their stead
Out of those forms transcendently sublime.

But ah! If such great dreamings come to me,
Who pen these fading fragments and obscure,
What blazing heights of sunrise they must see
Whose written words yet burn resplendently
And agelessly endure!