

## POETRY NIGHT

### CHAPTER INTRODUCTIONS

#### *The Symphonic Tapestry*

The grandest design that Eternity holds  
Is woven of threads that are picked up each day.  
The luminous life that will live alway  
Is wrot from the Tints which each Hour unfolds

But

The luminous life is a vain conceit.  
For the warp and woof of the grand Ideal  
Tangle and snarl in the Creaking Real  
And threads won't run and lines won't meet.

To some it is Providence (Capital P.)  
To some it is Luck (with a big, big D.)  
But Luck or Fate or whatever it may  
It touches life after its own sweet way.  
The man below bobs up with a smile  
And sports on the surface with Bubbles a-while.  
The man on top goes down with McG.  
And is lost in the depths of the bottomless sea.

*The Heliogabali*

Inspired (?) by Heliogabali generally, and the Heliogabali of the Cliff Dwellers particularly. As Bertie, the Lamb, might have said — “and every fellah thinks that *he* — as well as the other fellah — is a devil of a fellah — but he isn’t.”

The form of this poem is peculiar. The parenthetical lines, while bearing upon or expanding the line each follows, form in themselves a complete Sextet, — which might well stand under a composite portrait of the giddy bunch.

Congenial friends about a board  
 (These are the Cliff Dwelling Heliogabali)  
 With vintage rare from cellars stored.  
 With song and quip and bubbling jest  
 (That babble and bubble — spiritus frumenti)  
 To give the dainty viands zest.

And ere the sparkling feast be done  
 (Some feast! that is served at a dollar a cover)  
 Swift sinking to oblivion —  
 That wines and viands may not pall  
 (How sassy it is to put such a thing over)  
 Nor two seem to drop where one does fall.

As feast and life draw toward an end  
 (They stick to the chairs as long as they're able)  
 This hopeful wish do all extend:  
 A cordialed meeting bye and bye  
 (At last the whole bunch is under the table)  
 Embalmed spirits hence to hie!

*Immortality*

I have listened on various and sundry occasions to the assumption by men of little experience and slight attainments that immortality was to be their part. Whatever could they do with it! Whatever of comfort or of happiness could immortality hold for one who had gained so little of what this mortal life has to offer! Real appreciation and understanding, real living, come only through personal participation in effort. How many of the Human Race have reached spiritually and emotionally to and through sculpture, as did Angelo; painting, as did Raphael; musical composition, as did Beethoven; acrobatics, as did Schaefer; design, as did Da Vinci; philosophy, as did Bacon; poesy, as did Shakespeare; and so on through the field of human endeavor. When such capacity and achievement is general in the race then will be the time to dream of immortality! This thought I have cast in sonnet form.

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Doest thou claim Immortality, O man!  
Thinkst thou thy soul will need so wide a space!  
Hast reached the confines of this measured place —  
Fulfilled in thought and deed the finite plan?  
Hast mastered Science and Philosophy;  
Known well through thine own act the joy of Art —  
Of every phase of Life become a part;  
In Rhythm set thy fettered spirit free?

The oceans of eternity were deep  
For him who has not plumbed the pool of time!  
Too vast were Immortality for one  
Who in this "little life" has failed to reap  
The harvest rich of thought and deed sublime  
Which mortal man has e'er conceived and done.

## VERS LIBRE

A LITTLE LOLLIPOP ALONG THE LATEST LITERARY LINE  
OF LEAST-RESISTANCE; CONSISTING OF A DEFINITION,  
A PRELUDE AND A "POME."

### *Definition*

*Vers libre* is a form in which  
a theme unworthy of a  
pure prose embodiment  
is developed by one who  
is incapable of pure poetic  
expression.

*Prelude*

I sought release in rhymed verse  
 But soon was disabused.  
 The metre went from bad to worse;  
 The only rhyme to come was hearse  
 My pen aught else refused.  
 So then I knew my Muse was dead;  
 And no one better knows,  
 That all the things I would have said  
 (Poetic fancy having fled)  
 Were better put in Prose.

But neither Prose nor Poetry  
 Would come at my command.  
 The only form, apparently,  
 Was Verse denominated "Free."  
 But such Verse must be "Scanned."  
 It must be scanned by fleshly eye,  
 For to the physically blind  
 Free Verse affords no means whereby  
 It may impress, or even try  
 As Poetry to reach, the mind.

CLUB PAPERS

For to the eye of flesh alone  
Free Verse as Poetry appears;  
Law, Order and Restraint are gone;  
Of pulsing melody — there's none  
To fill the spirit's listening ears.  
An amiable amble, gentle jog,  
A balk — it's Form; a wabbly trot.  
Sophisticated, luminous fog  
And Sentiment drawn from a bog  
Disport themselves as "Rhymes of Thought."

And so, as Poetry will not come  
To aid me in this dire case,  
As pure, sweet Prose is not at home  
(And other Prose disturbs me some)  
I'll ask Vers Libre to save my face.  
With such may one confuse the Arts  
And sing for eye and paint for ear,  
And dance for corpses stiff whose hearts  
Have long since passed to other parts  
Nor hate, nor love, nor hope, nor fear.



*The Pome*

Upon the floor  
A Child  
And yet another child —  
Two children so —  
And still 'tis hard to understand  
Why 'tis  
A child and yet another child  
Should be two child-ren  
And not  
Two child-s!  
But even so.  
Between the two  
A Chessboard stretched, —  
Its squares of black  
And white  
With Kings and Queens and pawns bedeckt.  
And Knights and Bishops were there  
And Castles, too.  
One pawn rambunctious got  
And  
In one single move he swept the whole field clear!  
Loud laughter followed this on-slaught; and glee!

CLUB PAPERS

The child,  
The other child,  
The childer-en  
Enjoyed the sport,  
The game. —  
Ah yes,  
The sport,  
The game. —  
(A rhyme, or better — parallel — of thought.)  
Ah yes!  
But then, indeed, was it a game?  
Not chess —  
Though played with Knights and pawns and Kings  
And Queens  
On chessman's field.  
There was no law,  
No stern,  
Inflexible and stringent rules  
To be obeyed; no heavenly order  
Set  
To be maintained.  
A mere child's whim — and nothing more!  
To the child a game?  
Yes, only to the child!  
And on such games as this are only children fed —  
And on such poetry —  
And only to the uninitiated are  
Such things real games;

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And only to the unimaginative is such  
Stuff poetry.  
But it is fun!  
And We,  
Kids,  
Must have fun.

Frost is on the pane  
For 'tis a slushy, slippery,  
Winter's day.  
Within,  
A petal from a rose,  
Falls from a jar —  
And by a jar.  
(A subtle thought  
And rhyme of static state and motion, too!)  
And floating lightly down the air  
Rests on the rug.  
Ah, there is law!  
The law of gravity.  
The child,  
The other child,  
The child-ren,  
Note it not,  
Without, —  
(Oh! subtle rhyme of place  
And circumstance —  
Within — without!) —

#### CLUB PAPERS

Without,  
A fleshy woman slips upon the ice  
And, with gesticulation wild,  
She falls  
Upon her ear. —  
(Another rhyme of thought  
And subtle rhyme of place!  
Upon her rear.) —  
The law of gravity again!  
The children note it not.  
But —  
The law of levity appears holding shaking sides,  
And tickles children's in'ards  
To the core, as,  
Flabbergast and all distraught, the woman picks  
Her heavy body up!  
Would God!  
Man had the Childer's innocence  
And insouciance  
And felt and saw in forms of modern art  
Some what of that light levity  
Grave, stupid gravity instills!  
Then were we sane,  
And, after each depressing swat,  
We could  
Unlike the female dumpling dropt,  
Smiling 'rise and rehabilitate ourselves again.