

AMPHORA



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BURNS AND OATES

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Prologue

MOTHER and maiden! on the natal night
Embowered in bliss of roses red and white,
Westward three Magi move to minister
To Him with gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Those Pagans gazing on the Heavenly Host
Were blest of FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST;
And me, though I be as an heathen Mage,
Thou wilt accept in this my pious page.

AMPHORA

BOOK I

AMPHORA

I

THE worlds were drunken as with wine
When, shimmering from the throne divine,
The soul of Mary fixed its ray
Within the meek and maiden clay.

The stars in mightier music rolled ;
The sun achieved a gladder gold ;
The moon less pure acclaimed the morn ;
—Mary immaculate is born.

Rejoice, O children of the earth,
At your salvation brought to birth !
This is the perfect period.
Mary is born that shall bear GOD.

Amen.

AMPHORA

II

BEHOLD within the veil withdrawn
Thy mighty star on chaos dawn,
Thy beatific breath complete
The purpose of the PARACLETE.

Where sinful sorrow doth oppress,
Thy sinless sorrow doth redress,
O maid whom seven demon lords
Thrust through the heart with seven swords!

O sweet and sober mother-maid,
Within my heart each bleeding blade
Shudders, as, meditating Thee,
Thy mercy sheds its shower on me!

O mother Mary, from Thy soul
Distil the balm to make me whole;
And when the dreary days are done
Lead up my spirit to Thy Son!

Amen.

AMPHORA

III

WE praise thee, blessed maid of GOD,
That art the spirit in the sod.
Thou art the bird within the bower,
And Thou the honey in the flower!

Thou art the moon in Egypt's night;
The shade from Afric's blasting light!
In all the world of ill we bow
To the one good, and that is Thou.

For blazing in Thy blessed womb
Glitters the CHRIST, a star of doom
To cast the stars of evil kings
Into the blind abyss of things.

Hail, Mary, hail! Thou didst conceive
The Holy Child whom we believe.
Draw Thou our loyal spirits hence
In rapture and in reverence!

Still be the beatific balm
To heal, to comfort, and to calm!
Still make to bud the barren rod,
And bring our spirits back to GOD!

Amen.

AMPHORA

IV

THOU star at sea, that still dost point
The unimaginable goal,
With eucharistic rays anoint
The wounds of this my sinful soul!

The seas are strong, the charts obscure;
The compass spells a traitor rune.
Do thou exalt thy loyal lure
Above the dead deceitful moon!

The sailors mutiny; the storm
Wilder and wilder shrieks and wails,
And phantoms ghastly and difform
Haunt thy poor captain as he sails.

Grant, as death's iceberg threatens me,
Sin's fog, Satanic spite that bars,
That I may keep these eyes on Thee,
Star on the sea that blots the stars!

Amen.

AMPHORA

V

THE shadows fall about the way ;
Strange faces glimmer in the gloom ;
The soul clings feebly to the clay.
For that, the void ; for this, the tomb !

But Mary sheds a blessed light ;
Her perfect face dispels the fears.
She charms Her melancholy knight
Up to the glad and gracious spheres.

O Mary, like a pure perfume
Do thou receive this failing breath,
And with Thy starry lamp illumine
The darkling corridors of death !
Amen.

AMPHORA

VI

GO seek, O my soul, thy veridical home
In the palace of GOD where the work as the
will is!

There are wonderful lilies afloat in the foam,
And Mary is throned in the midst of the lilies.

Go seek, O my soul, in the sorrowful sea,
The Cross where GOD'S agony culminates, closes!
The roses are heaped till they cover the tree,
And Mary is throned in the midst of the roses.

Go take, O my soul, thy poor heart that has bled
To pallor and death for thine evil behaviour!
The heart of the SAVIOUR redeems it to red,
And Mary is throned in the heart of the SAVIOUR.
Amen.

AMPHORA

VII

O HAPPY flower, on whom there fell
The dew of the Ineffable !
O jewelled cup, wherein was poured
The precious liquor of the LORD !

Through thee by the infernal goad
The seven bleeding sorrows flowed :
Thou keepest secret and apart
The wounds of JESUS in Thine heart.

Through Thee by the divine consent
The seven ecstatic joys are sent :
Thy secret worship shall inspire
Our hearts with His devoted fire.

O mother, to Thy house of death
We fly from life's deceitful breath.
O star of love upon the sea,
We sail to Thee—we sail to Thee !

Amen.

AMPHORA

VIII

ALL hail, dread LORD, all hail!
Smite through Thy rended veil
Light till our sun grows pale—
Eclipsed, discrowned!
Now might not men withstand,
Save that one maiden bland
Aids with Her splendid hand
Them whose poor power is spanned
By earth's sad ground.

All hail! dear CHRIST, all hail!
None could endure Thy pale
Anguish; all creatures veil
Their woeful eyes.
Joy fills the hells of hate.
Thou shalt their rage abate,
Conquer the lords of fate,
Virgin immaculate,
Serene and wise!

AMPHORA

All hail, bright Ghost, all hail!
Thou didst Thy splendours veil
In that entrancing pale

Maternal maid.

Nor could thy flame carouse
On our unlighted brows,
Save that Thy sweet sad spouse
Sends from Her holy house

Her puissant aid.

Amen.

AMPHORA

IX

HAIL to Thee, Lady bright,
Queen of the stars of night!

Ave Maria!

Spouse of the Breath Divine,
Hail to Thee, shrouded shrine,
Whence our REDEEMER came!
Hail to Thy holy name!

Ave Maria!

Hail, Hail, O Queen, to Thee,
Spouse of Eternity!

Ave Maria!

Mother in Maidenhood!
Saintly Beatitude!
Queen of the Angel Host!
Bride of the HOLY GHOST!

Ave Maria!

Amen.

AMPHORA

X

ROLL through the caverns of matter, the world's
irremovable bounds!

Roll, ye wild billows of ether! the cymbal is shaken
and sounds!

Wild and sonorous the clamour, vast in the region of
death,

Live with the Fire of the Spirit, the essence and flame
of the breath!

Sound, O sound!

Gleam in the world of the dark, where the chained
ones shall tremble and flee!

Gleam in the skies of the dusk, for the Light of the
Dawn is in me!

Light on the forehead, and life in the nostrils, and
love in the breast,

Shine, O thou Star of the Dawning, thou Sun of the
Radiant Crest!

Shine, O shine!

Flame through the sky in the strength of the Chariot
wheels of the Sun!

AMPHORA

Flame, ye young fingers of light, on the West of the
Dawning that run!

Flame, O thou Meteor Car, for Her fire is exalted in
thee!

Lighten the darkness, and herald the daylight, and
waken the sea!

Flame, O flame!

Crown Her, O crown Her with Stars as with flowers
for a virginal gaud!

Crown Her, O crown Her with Light and the flame
of the down-rushing Sword!

Crown Her, O crown Her with Love for maiden and
Mother and wife!

Hail unto Mary! Hail! for She is the Lady of Life!

Mary crowned!

Amen.

AMPHORA

XI

O QUEEN of Heaven, who didst conceive
The ALMIGHTY without sin,
Give us the rapture to receive
Thy sinless love within !

Our souls are stained, our thoughts impure ;
O Queen of Heaven, assoil
Our error, our distemperature
With Thine anointing oil !

Our censers fume before Thy feet.
Through all the starry host
Whisper the sacred words and sweet :
“Receive the HOLY GHOST!”

Amen.

AMPHORA

XII

BE still! before the altar gates
The incense steam aspires;
The priest of JESUS stands and waits
At those consuming fires;
The grey cathedral dominates
Our pitiful desires.

O Mary! of Thy Motherhood
To all Thy worshippers,
Bring us to Thy beatitude
Whose sweet impulsion stirs
The soul lethargic unto good,
The slaves to ministers!

Our Lady, sorrowful and sweet,
Thy precious gift bestow!
Thy holy spouse the PARACLETE
Breathe down on us below
That all the chrism be complete,
Thy servants pure as snow!

AMPHORA

Our Lady, let Thy darling dove
Our holy wishes heed!
Bring down the Spirit from above,
With JESUS intercede,
Till all the night dissolve in love
That shall be Light indeed!
Amen.

AMPHORA

XIII

MARY, Mother of our GOD,
Hear our faint ecstatic prayer!
Kindle Spirit in the clod!
Kindle hope in our despair!
Be His saving mercy spilt
Like a fountain on our sin!
Match His Godhead with our guilt!
Light the love of GOD within!

O majestic! O Divine!
O most merciful and pure!
Let our spirits at Thy shrine
Humbled, gladden and endure!
Help the weakness of our sight
Blind before Thy radiant face!
Bring us to Thy full delight
By the ardour of Thy grace!

Darkling doors and dangerous
In the ways of life and death:—
Cleanse us! help us! succour us
By the beatific breath!

AMPHORA

Till the fullness of Thy light
Shine upon the untrodden way,
Drown this dull, deceitful night
In Thy sempiternal day!
Amen.

AMPHORA

BOOK II

AMPHORA

I

NO flower have I. O Queen, receive
This sere and sodden leaf!
O Mary maiden, I believe!
Help Thou mine unbelief!

No sails have I. The tempests reave
My wreck on Error's reef.
O Mary maiden, I believe!
Help Thou mine unbelief!

No wheat have I. O Queen, receive
This coarse and oaten sheaf!
O Mary maiden, I believe!
Help Thou mine unbelief!

No lands have I. Do Thou retrieve
My soul, the forfeit fief!
O Mary maiden, I believe!
Help Thou mine unbelief!

No joy have I. My follies grieve
Me with exceeding grief.
O Mary maiden, I believe!
Help Thou mine unbelief!

AMPHORA

No CHRIST have I, save Thou achieve
This miracle-in-chief!
O Mary maiden, I believe!
Help Thou mine unbelief!
Amen.

AMPHORA

II

ALL hail to Mary wandering
Adored by shepherd and by Mage!
The fury of the ruthless king
Inspires Her desert pilgrimage.

O sorrow of pure eyes beneath
The heavy-fringed ecstatic lids,
Seeing for maiden song and wreath
Sphinxes and pagan Pyramids!

O sorrow bitterer than death
To leave the dear delighted land,
And change the groves of Nazareth
For lonely leagues of sterile sand!

To us who wander desolate
In Earth's sad wilderness do Thou
Bend down Thy lips immaculate
And touch and kiss the adoring brow!
Amen.

AMPHORA

III

O CHANT in cadence dark and deep
The dread mirific Name,
The corners of His robe that sweep
The Universe with flame!

O chant in cadence softly sighed
The SAVIOUR'S grace Who came
And for our sins was crucified
Upon the cross of shame!

O chant in cadence whispering
The HOLY GHOST that poured
On Mary's bosom soft as spring
The unction of the LORD!

In silence let our hearts adore
The Mother-maid Divine,
And all our vows like swallows soar
To Her celestial shrine!

Amen.

AMPHORA

IV

FROM winter's bleak and bitter prison
Up-surges the delighted spring.
The tomb is broke; the LORD is risen.
Hail! Thou anointed King!

Now, O Thou pitiful and pallid,
Who to the cross didst cleave and cling,
Thy tears to life from death have rallied
Thy SON, the Holy King!

Eater of flesh and soul and spirit,
The Lord of Hell on dropping wing
His doom of dolour doth inherit
From our anointed King.

See! headlong where he reels and plunges
To the abyss, a noisome thing!
He falls! Our sin Thy SON expunges!
Thy SON, the Holy King!

Then, O thou mildest maiden mother,
Thou feedest us! our crowns we fling
Here at Thy feet, who art no other
Than Lady of our King

AMPHORA

O bring us swiftly to the waters
Of peace ; our souls in joyance bring,
As we adore, Thy sons and daughters,
Thy SON, the Holy King!

Thy seven sacraments deliver
That so Thy sorrows may not sting!
O lead us upward to the river
Of our anointed King!

With these desires my life be laden!
These two adore, my soul! and sing!
Mary, Thou mildest mother-maiden,
Thy SON, the Holy King!

Amen.

AMPHORA

V

THE earth is dark, save where desires
Exhale their black and bitter fires.
Save for Thy sorrow, heaven is bright
With cool and soft celestial light.

But gazing deeper as we dare
By virtue of retreat and prayer,
Of fasting and of vigilance,
We pierce beyond to brilliance.

For all the blessed blood that poured
Out of Thine heart at sorrow's sword
Is borne in GOD's cherubic cars
About the sky to make us stars.

We in the world of woe who stray
Lift up our hearts to Thee and pray:
Turn all our pain to virgin might,
And all our sorrow into light!

Amen.

AMPHORA

VI

LIFT up, mine heart ! Lift up, mine heart !
The autumn leaves of earth depart
Before the buds in heaven that bloomed
To greet Thee, Mary maid, assumed.

All earth and heaven compose Thy throne ;
All saints and maids and martyrs own
The joyous gift of GOD to Thee,
And Angels quire Thy sanctity.

Abase, my head, to this Divine
Decree, and worship Mary's shrine
Wherefrom the healing springs upstart :—
Lift up, mine heart ! Lift up, mine heart !
Amen.

AMPHORA

VII

I
BEFORE the veil of death divide
And usher man to bliss or bale
He hath an hour to heal his pride
And greet Thee with a glad "All hail"!

CHORUS;

Hail Mary, blessed through the ages!
Hail Mary, blessed to the term!
Thou hast stilled the heathen as he rages,
And trod upon the laidly worm.

II
In calm and storm, in peace and strife,
There is a lull; be ours to scale
Therein the pinnacles of life
By greeting Thee with Mary hail!

III
Some of us conquer and succeed;
Some in the battle flinch and fail:
Thou art enough for either need:—
All greet Thee with the glad "All hail"!
Amen.

AMPHORA

VIII

WHEN all the world is wrapt in cloud,
The storm-fiend yells and raves aloud,
Our heads in peace to Thee are bowed
With Hail, O holy Mary!

When on the burnt and blazing plains
The hard sun withers up our veins,
We raise to Thee our subtle strains
Of Hail, Thou holy Mary!

When on the sea its combers grim
Circle the sky from rim to rim,
We sing to thee the holy hymn
Of Hail, Thou holy Mary!

When on the mountains in the ice
We hang above some precipice,
We offer Thee the sacrifice,
And hail Thee, holy Mary!

Still, when the icy breeze of death
Cuts through the bastions of breath,
Thou hearest him who murmureth
All hail, O holy Mary! *Amen.*

AMPHORA

IX

HARK to the cry of the heavenly choir
Earth with their music that rouse and inspire!
Hark to the lordly celestial lyre!
Ave Maria!

Martyrs and virgins in ecstasy bow;
Angels and spirits their radiance vow
Unto the vision supreme that is Thou,
Ave Maria!

See where the cherubin pallid and plumed
Swing with their thuribles praises perfumed!
JESUS is risen and Mary assumed:—
Ave Maria!

We who are men—shall we flag in the praise
Due to the Holy One, Ancient of Days?
Soar, O our song, in a crystal amaze!
Ave Maria!

Amen.

AMPHORA

X

MIRACULOUS birth of the roses
In the fervour of summer aswing
Awaken the soul that reposes
To praise of our SAVIOUR the King.
Let myrtle and honey and amber
Be mixed in the censer and spiced
That our worship may cluster and clamber
To the mother of CHRIST and the CHRIST.

Miraculous birth of the lilies,
Afloat in the fountains that spring,
One Voice on the lake that is still, is
The voice of our SAVIOUR the King.
Let corn for His Body be gilded!
Pour wine for His Blood the unpriced!
That a temple of worship be builded
For CHRIST and the Mother of CHRIST.

Too pale the libation we spill is;
Too cold is the censer we swing;
The glory exceeds of Thy lilies,
O Mother Divine of the King!

AMPHORA

Yet daily our worship shall quicken
The dust, till our souls are sufficed
With the fire from the stars of Ye stricken,
O CHRIST and O Mother of CHRIST.
Amen.

AMPHORA

XI

S EVEN are the Spirits and the lamps are seven ;
I saw a wonder in the house of heaven.
Behold a woman girded with the sun
Beneath whose feet the liquid moon did run !

Twelve were the stars that crowned that shining
head
Whereon the HOLY GHOST His silence shed,
That so Her womb a SAVIOUR should environ
To rule the nations with a rod of iron.

I saw moreover how She bore the Child,
And how the Dragon drave Her to the wild,
Loosing a flood of venom ; but the earth
Gaped and devoured it in her warrior girth.

I saw red war in heaven ; Saint Michael fell
With all his angels on the host of hell.
Saint Michael ! praise to thee who didst prevail
And pen the demons in the hollow vale !

AMPHORA

Now is the royal mystery outrun ;
Mary is gathered to the Holy One.
The vision fails ; and we abase our eyes
In silent praise and solemn ecstasies.

Hail, Mary, hail ! Our song goes up to Thee ;
From Thee descends the quickening decree.
Like trembling flowers our souls accept the stress
Of Thine exalted dew of holiness.

Amen.

AMPHORA

XII

UNDER the shade of flowering trees
We kneel (Thine ardent devotees)
And in Thy mercy find our ease.

Beside the pleasant streams we move,
Our thoughts concentrated on the above,
And find our joyance in Thy love.

When Death's cold stream runs black and
chill,
And yew and cypress haunt the hill,
Be Thou our love and comfort still.

Receive us (by Thy Motherhood)
By deathless stream and fadeless wood
In Thy celestial solitude.

Amen.

AMPHORA

XIII

AS in the sleeping lake we view
A pallid image of the blue,
So in Thy Chapel may we see
A faint enshadowing of Thee.

Our minds are dull, our lives are base ;
We cannot see the maiden face.
Imagination may not run
From moonlight to the self-lit sun.

Darkly as in a glass we gaze
And lose ourselves in pious praise.
How then when risen and pure of heart
In heaven we see Thee as Thou art ?

O let the film of earth and sin
Each day by love grow clear and thin !
O let Thy worship done aright
Prepare us for the eternal Light !

Amen.

AMPHORA

BOOK III

AMPHORA

I

S AINT MICHAEL! by the altar stand
And mark our praises sink and swell,
The fire of heaven in Thine hand
That bare the glad ensanguine brand,
And smote the sons of hell.

Be present all the starry host
Of cherubim and seraphim,
While, hasted by the HOLY GHOST,
We raise on Time's eroded coast
Our rare and royal hymn.

Let all the ripples of our song
Exulting evermore converge
In one the virgin wave and strong,
Combine their chorus loud and long
Re-quicken and up-surge!

Hail to the Virgin! Hail! we cry.
Hail, Mary! Hail! All hail! All hail!
The utmost caverns of the sky,
The abysses of eternity,
Repeat the hail! All hail!

AMPHORA

O plumed and puissant couriers!
O Angels clothed and crowned with light!
O mild and matchless ministers
Of GOD, how deep the silence stirs
At this our choral might!

Hail to the Virgin! Hail! the streams
Are gathered in the starry river;
The incense column subtly steams
Up past the palaces of dreams:—
To Mary, Hail for ever!

Hail to the Virgin, Hail! the sea
Is one; the stars divide and pale
Before Thy single ecstasy
Of light, O moon of majesty!
Hail to Thee! Hail! All hail!
Amen.

AMPHORA

II

ENSHRINED in cloistral sanctity
I sit and worship solemnly.
Mary is everything to me.
I hail Thee holy Mary.

By day and night I sit alone
Mute as a monument of stone,
And meditate before the throne
Of bright and blessed Mary.

I see Her glory from afar
Gleam like some cold and sacred star
Among the solitudes that are
The shrines of blessed Mary.

Bid Thou these filmy eyes to see!
Turn Thou this heart to grace and glee!
Bring Thou my sense-dulled self to Thee,
O bright and blessed Mary!

The song may cease, but through the air
Ever shall course the perfect prayer
Even to Thy heart, O royal, rare,
And holy Virgin Mary!

AMPHORA

In every various circumstance
Thou healest with Thy holy glance,
If but our trembling souls advance
With—Hail, O Mother Mary.

Pour forth, we pray, the dewy ease
Thou sheddest on Thy devotees,
Who greet Thee humbly on their knees
With—Hail, O holy Mary.

Thy mystic mercy as a Dove
Let overshadow us above!
Receive us to Thy House or Love
Who hail Thee holy Mary!

Amen.

AMPHORA

III

BE still, my soul, and let the sense
Of Her intuitive influence
Steal like the whisper of young rains
Upon thy bleak and barren plains.

By many a mental martyrdom
Our sterile souls to Mary come.
Who passeth through the surge and fire
At last shall win to his desire.

Thy grace for us sufficient still
To smite the arbiters of ill
Shall grant the exceeding great reward
To look by Thee upon the LORD.

Be still, my soul, whate'er assail!
Through Mary they shall not prevail;
And thou resigned in peace await
Her peace at Her appointed date.

Amen.

AMPHORA

IV Vigil

THE race of day is duly run,
And men, the children of the sun,
Turn them to sleep; but I awake
For Mary's sake—for Mary's sake.
And while these eyes outwatch the stars
My soul runs through the golden bars.

O clusters that with warp and woof
Make up Fate's web, I stand aloof.
The child of Mary stands apart
Both from the terror and the dart.
No fear, no evil can engage
The knight of Mary's pilgrimage.

So in this still and solemn hour
Of vigil we proclaim Thy power.
Thy benediction, like a balm,
Unite our ardour with our calm,
And ere the black night pale to grey,
Discover Thy diviner day!

Amen.

AMPHORA

V

Sacrament of Penance

THREE blest and four times blest is he who goes
With bleeding feet about this world of woes,
And prostrate casts his aching diadem
Before Thy shrine, O mild and mystic Rose!
Him all the stars and all the sky begem,
For Thou art all the radiance of them.

The lean scourged body and the tortured brain
Glow with the light of Thy celestial rain.
Thou art the secret of the pure keen pleasure
Whose fountain springs from the abyss of pain.
Thee do we praise in many a merry measure
Who art of GOD most high the single treasure.

He hath ten jewels in His holy House ;
All these be mystic, clear and luminous ;
But only Thou art worthy of the throne,
O Mother and O daughter and O spouse
Of Him that reigns above, triune, alone,
And joins Thine equal splendour with His own !

Amen.

AMPHORA

VI

Good Friday

AT the foot of the Cross is the Mother of God,
And Her tears are like rain to enliven the sod,
While the Blood of the LORD from His Body that runs
Is the heat of the summer, the fire of its suns.

In the darkness and fear of the torturing hours,
The Mother brings life in the strength of Her showers ;
The Son with the fire of His Passion withdrawn
Enkindles the night to the life of the Dawn.

In the cup of the world, as pure water and wine,
His sorrow is mingled and mixed into Thine,
For a liquor to heal us the children of night,
The Immaculate Light, the Immaculate Light !

Amen.

AMPHORA

VII

In Time of Trouble

O QUEEN, deliver me from the infernal kings !
O shield me in your span, ye everlasting wings !
I kneel at Mary's shrine ; the incense fumes ascend
To bring my spirit through to GOD'S appointed end.

Though in the valley of the shade of death I be,
I fear not ; for Thy rod and staff they comfort me.
I imprecate the aid of Mary, Mother mild !
The asp and dragon bow before Her Holy Child.

The heathen did uprise ; the folk of fear and doubt.
Great bulls of Bashan did encompass me about.
The lions roared for prey ; the eagles screamed for food :
All these were stilled before thy crownèd Motherhood.

Therefore, though men devise ill counsels and vain
things,
Thou wilt deliver me from the infernal kings ;
And when the pilgrimage of me Thy knight is done,
Thy favour shall present my spirit to Thy Son.
Amen.

AMPHORA

VIII

In Time of Drought

WHEN drought of summer parches up
Earth's beatific bowers,
O pour from Thy crystalline cup
Ambrosial showers!

We wander shelterless athirst
Throughout the wilderness,
And Thou our pilgrimage accurst
Alone canst bless.

The red sun scorches up our veins;
The white moon makes us mad;
Pitiless stars insult our pains
With clamour glad.

But Thou art shelter and defence
From them that rage and spoil.
Assain our lives with penitence!
Our souls assoil!

Amen.

AMPHORA

IX

Matins

NOW when the sun uplifts his rim
Above the sea, let us rejoice!
Exalt GOD'S Mother in the hymn
With an united voice!

We gladly wake to toil and praise,
Since these our purpose speed
By walking humbly in Thy ways
To worship Thee indeed.

Let all the life and love and light
Of earth and sky and sea
Soar in one flame's surpassing might
To Thee—to Thee—to Thee!

Amen.

AMPHORA

X

Vespers

NOW at the setting of the sun
We turn our thoughts to rest and sleep.
Do Thou, O chaste and Holy One,
Our spirits keep!
O shed Thy radiance forth in streams
To keep us in the Land of Dreams!

The subtle enemy of man
Marshals his hosts to work us ill.
His demons bloat or deathly wan
Sustain his will.
More than day's arrow doth affright
The Fear that walketh in the night.

Keep Thou our dreams! Let holy words
And angel voices breathing balm
And sweetly-tuned celestial birds
Uplift their psalm!
Our meditations on Thy grace
Blend to the vision of Thy face.

AMPHORA

So shall we sleep without alarm
And wake refreshed to worship Thee,
Thy children from infernal harm
For ever free,
Until we pray Thine holy breath
To keep us in the Land of Death.
Amen.

AMPHORA

XI

Feast of the Nativity

THE cool December breezes
Appease the glowing sun.
The agonies and eases
Of all the year are done :—
When eastward through the lampless night
There shone a strange and splendid light.

The noise of pomp and battle
Of Israel died away.
Amid the lowing cattle
The Holy Mother lay,
While at Her breast the Child Divine
Drank in the starry milk and wine.

Three magians Chaldean
Have bowed their royal knees
Before the Galilean,
The GOD of stars and seas,
And tasted all the fervent grace
That shone from Mary's maiden face.

AMPHORA

That star of resurrection
Still stands above the night ;
Its portent of perfection
Shall bring us all to light ;
And by the peace of Mary's prayers
Our rapture stands, exceeding theirs !
Amen.

AMPHORA

XII

A WAKE the earthly choir
To match the host of heaven,
Where the seven lamps of mystic fire
Shine, and the spirits seven !

In this religious gloom
Invoke the light divine
As, Mary, in Thy blessed womb
GOD made the Daystar shine.

This common fruit of earth
Be made the Body of grace
Even as the flesh by Jesu's birth
Was holy for a space.

All things by heavenly power
To that redemption come
Equal before Thee in the hour
Of joy or martyrdom.

Amen.

AMPHORA

XIII

Sacrament of Penance

BY night I waste upon my bed
For Her to whom my worship soars ;
By day I bow my weary head
Within Her melancholy doors.

I shall not ever be content
With earth and all its tedious pleasure.
I look toward the great event,
To Mary's bliss, the starry treasure.

I scourge my body till the blood
Pours from this heart that hateth light,
Mix with its tide Thy crystal flood !
O Mary, cleanse Thine acolyte !

Accept this offering of pain !
Receive Thy neophyte's devotion,
Till to Thy peace he rise again,
O star of love on sorrow's ocean !

Amen.

AMPHORA

BOOK IV

AMPHORA

I

Feast of the Nativity

THE Virgin lies at Bethlehem
(Bring gold and frankincense and myrrh!)
The root of David shoots a stem.
(O HOLY SPIRIT, shadow Her!)

She lies alone amid the kine.
(Bring gold and frankincense and myrrh!)
The straw is fragrant as with wine.
(O HOLY SPIRIT, shadow her!)

There are three Kings upon the road.
(Bring gold and frankincense and myrrh!)
She hath thrice blest the Name of GOD.
(O HOLY SPIRIT, shadow her!)

There stands her star above the sky.
(Bring gold and frankincense and myrrh!)
She hath thrice blest the TRINITY.
(O HOLY SPIRIT, shadow her!)

Her joyful ardour hath sufficed.
(Bring gold and frankincense and myrrh!)
She is delivered of the CHRIST.
(The angels come to worship Her!) *Amen.*

AMPHORA

II

Consecration of a Nun

THE suns of Terra pale ;
The mists of Terra flee ;
To lift Thy veil we take Thy veil,
And give our lives to Thee.

Our hopes are sacrificed
At Thy pellucid shrine.
We worship CHRIST ; to wed with CHRIST
We take Thy vows divine.

O Thou supremely pure,
Cleanse Thou this feeble clay !
Thy grace endure that we endure
To that mirific day !

Our virgin brows and pale
The holy Crown shall gird.
Who took Thy veil shall lift Thy veil
And hear the final Word.

AMPHORA

CHORUS:

O hear us, Mary blest !
Thy heavenly love accord,
That we may rest on JESU's breast,
Thy Son, our living LORD !
Amen.

AMPHORA

III

Pro Gente Anglicana

I

IN great cathedral cities,
In cloisters old and dim,
Wherever worth or wit is,
We raise the choral hymn.
To GOD'S eternal Mother
We lift our hearts of flame;
We join with one another
To bless Her holy name.

II

O hear us, blessed Mary!
Thy graces send as dew,
As kisses fond and faery
Our spirits to renew!
O bid our sinful nation,
The broken from the rod,
By Thine initiation
Soar subtly up to GOD!

AMPHORA

III

Bewitched by sins and errors,
By heresies defiled ;
Avert the avenging terrors
Of Thine insulted Child !
Schismatic from His Vicar,
Despoilers of His flock :
O Strike the saving liquor
From out the barren rock !

IV

Acknowledge our contrition !
Accept our sighs and tears !
Let English inanition
Be lost in happier years !
On this stagnated water
Evoke Thy glowing tide !
Our Church Thy worthy daughter,
And His accepted Bride !

Amen.

AMPHORA

IV

Pro Gentibus

IN the choir's delicious dim
Fragrance let us lift the hymn
Fiery as the Seraphim—
Ave, blessed Mary!

Send the sweet and solemn strain
Through the far enchanted fane,
Till the skies ring back again
Ave, blessed Mary!

Purest lips of grace and youth
Invoke Thy royal ruth,
Conjure by the Word of Truth—
Ave, blessed Mary!

Maiden bodies vowed to Thee,
Souls of stainless chastity,
Cry Thy worship ardently—
Ave, blessed Mary!

AMPHORA

As from heaven the lightnings hurled
Let our song be lashed and curled
Round the shoulders of the world!

Ave, blessed Mary!

Let the joys thereof assuage
Heathen horrors in their rage
Grisly war on Thee that wage—

Ave, blessed Mary!

Let Thy foes be brought to shame.
Turn their hearts to holy flame
To the glory of Thy name—

Ave, blessed Mary!

Crown our arms with water crossed!
Bring to perfect Pentecost
All the legions of the lost!

Ave, blessed Mary!

Amen.

AMPHORA

V

Recovery from Sickness

O THOU whose mystic Motherhood was fain
To journey with us through the Land of Pain,
Let not delight quench that which sorrow fanned.
O journey with us through the Pleasant Land!

Arise, O soul! be thy devotion's dower
Keener and gladder every glad keen hour!
The rays of praise outglitter and outrun
The candid brilliance of the choral sun.

Hear us, O Mary, blessed Queen of GOD!
Bless Thou the wreath as Thou hast blessed the rod!
Endow us from Thy star-embattled coast
With the perfections of the HOLY GHOST!

Amen.

AMPHORA

VI Vigil

WITH the Cross on my sword as its sigil
With the foes of Thy Church I would
grapple,
All night by my arms I keep vigil
In the lonely and luminous chapel.

From the solemn monitions of even
I brood; Thou dost shine from above.
The veil of Thy mystical heaven
Is melted in glory and love.

O Thou, of Thy mercy apply
Thy grace to my spurs and my sword,
That my banner may flame to the sky
In the van of the hosts of the LORD!
Amen.

AMPHORA

VII In Partu

O THOU whose Son hath mastered the dread King,
The curse of Eve, the serpent of desire!
Aid Thou thy servant in her travailing!
Ease Thou the dolour dire!

O Thou whose life brought Light into the Light,
Be with us now to comfort and console
That this Thy servant, through Thy maiden might,
Achieve the goodly goal!

Or, if Thy pleasure be to take from earth
Thy servant to Thy holy house above,
That Thou mayst hold her, safe in happier birth,
In Thine especial love :—

Or, if Thy pleasure be to take the child
To join Thy choir of innocents in Heaven,
We do assure Thee, Virgin undefiled,
The gift is freely given.

AMPHORA

But if Thou wilt let both live merrily,
Two sparks of light in this our glamour dim!
Still let Thy servant grow more like to Thee,
The child more like to Him.

Amen.

AMPHORA

VIII

PRAISE unto Mary, Queen of Heaven's array,
Whose word shall save us on the Judgement
Day!

We serve Thee gracious, Thee compassionate—
O keep us in the Way serene and strait!

O keep us in the Way of those who bless
Thy favour filling out their feebleness,
And keep us ever from the fatal way
Of those unhappy ones who go astray!

Amen.

AMPHORA

IX

OF T when our prayers and praises fail
On wings unfledged to reach the
Throne,
Thou takest them beneath the veil
And makest them Thine own.

Of all our callow vows and cold,
Born hardly to much bitterness,
Thy mercy takes effectual hold
And granteth them success.

Not by our passion or our will
The eager suppliant is heard,
But by the white ecstatic thrill
Of Thy serener word.

Accept our prayer, accept our praise,
O Thou all praise and prayer above!
O fix our weak and wavering will
On Thee, the Queen of Love!

Amen.

AMPHORA

X

O QUEEN of Wisdom, Queen of Thought,
Bring us to Thine holy court!
Us, who wander in the maze
Of the world's deceitful ways,
Bring to Thine assured assent
By Thy mystic sacrament.

Queen of Mercy, Queen of Might,
Bring us to Thine ardent light!
We are weak and violent :
By Thy mystic sacrament
Bring us to Thy power and peace,
To the passionless release!

Queen of Splendour, Queen of Love,
Bring us to Thine House above,
Where in love and splendour dwell
All the saints that praise Thee well.
Bring us to their great content
By Thy mystic sacrament!

Amen.

AMPHORA

XI

I

BEHOLD the creatures Thou hast made,
O LORD, how frail we are and fickle,
Ephemeral as the tender blade
That falls before the eternal sickle!

CHORUS:

No shadow of turning in the LORD!
His purpose shall not change nor vary,
Splendid and stedfast as a sword
Live in the lambent heart of Mary.

II

Behold us, how we strive to good
And evil catches us and sways us,
How from child-life and maidenhood
Time creeps and springs on us and slays us!

III

But all our feebleness in Thee
Is firm, in Thee our ways are steady.
Equal for bliss or agony
Thou callest us—and we are ready.

AMPHORA

IV

By Mary's tenderness and truth
Make good our variable endeavour
To live in endless peace and youth
With Thee for ever and for ever!
Amen.

AMPHORA

XII

O MOTHER of Our LORD, we ask
Thy potent prayer in our distress ;
We nerve us for the royal task
And sink supine in feebleness.

The Eye of Heaven to us is blind ;
Time is so sad, and earth so grey ;
But by Thine influence we find
One steadfast star to shew the way.

Thine is the sympathetic balm
That eases from Life's bruising rod ;
And Thine the meek eternal calm
That brings our souls in tune with GOD
Amen.

AMPHORA

XIII

V EIL not Thy splendour in the shrine,
O Mary, let its glamour grow !
Our cold hearts waiting Thee to shine
Like sunrise on the utmost snow.

Thy favour melt our life in tears,
Till, gathering force, our love be hurled
An avalanche upon the years,
A tempest on the barren world !

As all the clouds of India break
In one wild gust upon the sand,
And in one week of wonder wake
The whole green gladness of the land ;

So be Thy mercy on us poured,
Thy beauty fill our aching brains !
Although it smite us as a sword
And fill us with immortal pains ;

Yet in its life our souls revive ;
By virtue of Thee we endure.
The end of endings must arrive,
Madonna !—and the end is sure. *Amen.*

