

THE BOOK OF JADE

Courtenay Lemon.

To

Hing.

31
f. n. 11

The Book of Jade

Courtenay Lemon.

THE BOOK OF JADE



Doxey's
At the Sign of the Lark
New York

Copyright
Doxey's 1901

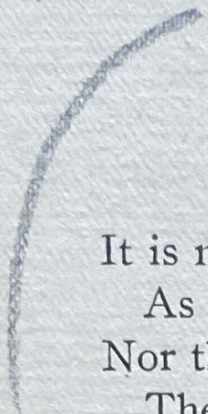
This edition is limited to six hundred copies,
of which this is No. 474

By Park Barnitz

To the Memory
of
Charles Baudelaire

TABLE

	PAGE
PRELUDE	II
PART ONE	
Ashtoreth	19
Parfait Amour	20
Opium	22
Sombre Sonnet.....	23
Languor.....	24
Ennui.....	25
Litany	26
Harvard.....	28
Pride.....	29
Song of Golden Youth.....	30
Mais Moi Je Vis La Vie En Rouge.....	32
Louanges D'Elle.....	34
Hélas	35
Sonnet.....	36
Sonnet.....	37



PARFAIT AMOUR

It is not that thy face is fair
As dying sunsets are,
Nor that thy lovely eyelids wear
The splendour of a star ;
Tis the deep sadness of thine eyes
Hath my heart captive led,
And that within thy soul I prize
The calmness of the dead.

O holy love, O fair white face,
O sweet lost soul of thine !
Thy bosom is an altar-place,
Thy kisses holy wine ;
Sweet incense offer'd for my bliss
Is thy corrupted breath,
And on thy stained lips I kiss
The holy lips of Death !

OPIUM

Naught is more sweet than gently to let dream
The pallid flower of life asleep alway;
Where the dim censer sends up far from day
Unceasingly its still-ascending stream,

O where the air winds its myrrh-scented steam
About thy naked body's disarray,
Shall not today's gold to thy shut eyes seem
Born and forgot in the dead ages gray?

Sunk from life's mournful loud processional,
For thee shall not with high uplifted urn
The Night pour out dreams that awake and say,

—We were, O pallid maiden vespéral,
Before the world; we also in our turn
By the vain morning gold scatter'd away.

SOMBRE SONNET

I love all sombre and autumnal things,
Regal and mournful and funereal,
Things strange and curious and majestic,
Whereto a solemn savor of death clings:

Coerulian serpents mark'd with azure rings;
Awful cathedrals where rich shadows fall;
Hoarse symphonies sepulchral as a pall;
Mad crimes adorn'd with bestial blazonings.

Therefore I love thee more than aught that dies,
Within whose subtile beauty slumbereth
The twain solemnity of life and death;

Therefore I sit beside thee far from day
And look into thy holy eyes alway,
Thy desolate eyes, thine unillumin'd eyes.

FRAGMENTS

There is no ground for sorrow ; nor in pride
For pride ; nor in them that in gladness sate ;
Wherefore with none of these shall I abide.
The sought is vanity ; the seeking great
Vanity ; the not-seeking vanity ;
For none of these change I my solemn state.

II

Then since no one could answer unto me
The question, and since no one could me tell
The wherefore of this endless Vanity
Of all the spirits that on earth did dwell,
I said—I go unto the Absolute ;
He will perchance release me from this hell.
Him that made noisy what before was mute
I found upon a heap of filthy dung
Low-sitting in the fashion of the brute.
In strange grimaces still his face he wrung,
Up to the chin within that filth immerst,
Which still his busy hands about him flung.
—Do thou those clothes wherein he is inhearst
Take off, said I to one, and do not shirk.
He did, while still that being howl'd and curst.

III

FRAGMENTS

For there so thick and muddy was the murk,
And he still bore of clothes so thick a weight,
I knew not well what thing therein did lurk.
Three coverings then that one removed straight—
Omniscience, Omnipresence, Omnipotence,
From off the thing that in the ordure sate.
Then did his truth show clear to every sense,
A filthy idiot so foul and low,
That decency the perfect tale prevents.
And I—O thou whose nakedness doth show
Like one not in the womb to fulness brought,
Why are all things that are; if thou dost know?
Then he replied from out the ordure hot:
—Brahma, great Brahma, Everlasting, I!
And I—Not such reply my question sought.
Answer thou me! And he still made reply:
—Brahma, great Brahma! repetition vain.
I asked again: and—Brahma! he did cry.
Then one thereby to me—Why art thou fain
Knowledge to have from It? It knows not, It;
Why seek for truth among the low insane?
Then he that did within the ordure sit
Out of the filth that lay about his feet
Such things as children make with little wit
Made, and then broke, and did the act repeat.

FRAGMENTS

Where moon-fac'd houris wanton arms do fling
Round Mahmud's blessed, I past by in scorn,
For my heart dream'd a deeper revelling.

Then came I to that banquet more divine
That Jayadeva and that Jami sing;
And the fair goblet fill'd full of the wine
Brought the cup-bearer clad with wantonness;
And there with the beloved and the vine
My heart grew weary of that blessedness.

From life I past, finding no joy therein,
The vision and the vine and drunkenness
Still like a circle ever closing in.

Then I departed to the final peace,
Sick of what is and shall be and hath been,
Of Brahma, as the drop sinks in the seas:

I past out from the bonds of thee-and-me,
Lost in that Infinite whose being is
Glory in all things and reality;

But therein I that was not I, alas
In that deliverance from me-and-thee
Where all illusion fadeth like to grass,
Found naught that equall'd my undimm'd desire;
—If that reality then real was,
What is that real more than trodden mire?
Then from all being did my spirit pass,

FRAGMENTS

Sick of all being whether low or higher.
Out of that circle unto nothingness
I came, unto Nirvana, the far goal
Of many a holy saint, where visions cease;
But nothingness did not my heart console.
Ah not in nothingness is any peace,
Nor in peace any peace, nor in the whole,
Nor in the vine nor in the vision, nor
In being nor non-being, nor in all
That man hath dream'd of and hath anguisht for.
Nay not in joy nor the vine jovial,
Nor in the perfume of the lov'd one's breath,
Nay nor in anything anywhere at all;
Nor in illusion; nor what sundereth
Illusion; in the sundering of that chain
There is no joy; and not alas in death
Find I that thing whereof my soul is fain.
All these things also are all vanity
No less than sun and stars that wax and wane
Forever in the everlasting sky.

SONG OF INDIA

Now at the last, Zulaikha, all my sorrows olden
Are farther off than Europe or than China seem,
And like an idle dream
The North is faded far off in the distance golden;
And here with thee I sit in perfect peace enfolden
Beside the Ganges-stream.

Full well I knew that ne'er those northern promontories
Could give to me the dream that did my soul desire;
For there my heart did tire;
For always me allur'd the strangely whisper'd stories
Of skies that burn with more consuming languid glories,
And suns of mightier fire.

I dream'd of heavier suns than burn in skies of ours,
And heavier airs that through the long long evening
 swoon
Under a larger moon,
And heavier-scented gardens fill'd with stranger flowers,
And tropic palms that wave through all the long long
 hours
Of endless afternoon.

SONG OF INDIA

Thou art that sweet whereof all poets dead have chaunted,
Therefore my soul hath sought thy face o'er pathless seas,
Here to have endless peace;
Thou art the garden of delight with slumber haunted,
Thy perfume maketh dream of desert lands enchanted,
And far-off oases.

Thou hast that beauty in thine all-consuming glances
That openeth the ways to far enchanted skies,
And in thy lotus-eyes
Thou hast the light that shineth in the countenances
Of them whose eyes have seen the glory which entrances
The blest of Paradise.

Thou art all sweets that unto perfect joy devote us,
In thee all spices and all scents together come,
O lute that now art dumb!
Thou art musk, frankincense, amomum, stephanotis,
Thou art the fragrant wine, the paradisal lotus,
Thou art the opium.

Hashsheesh nor opium are worth not thy caresses,
Sweeter than opium to still the spirit's drouth
Thine unassuaged mouth;
Him that hath known thy love no mortal grief distresses;

DEDICATION

These paltry rhymes, which loftier shall pursue
Than aught America of high or great
Hath seen since first began her world-wide state,
I dedicate, my brother, unto you.

ITE MISSA EST