

Dreams of Yith

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I

In distant Yith past crested, ragged peaks;
 On far-flung islands lost to worldly eyes,
A shadow from the ancient star-void seeks
 Some being which in caverns shrilly cries
A challenge; and the hairy dweller speaks 5
 From that deep hole where slimy Sotho lies.
But when those night-winds crept about the place,
They fled—for Sotho had no human face!

II

Beyond the valleys of the sun which lie
 In misty chaos past the reach of time;
And brood beneath the ice as aeons fly,
 Long waiting for some brighter, warmer clime;
There is a vision, as I vainly try 5
 To glimpse the madness that must some day climb
From age-old tombs in dim dimensions hid,
And push all angles back—unseal the lid!

III

Beside the city that once lived there wound
 A stream of putrefaction writhing black;
 Reflecting crumbling spires stuck in the ground
 That glow through hov'ring mist whence no stray track
 Can lead to those dead gates, where once was found 5
 The secret that would bring the dwellers back.
 And still that pitch-black current eddies by
 Those silver gates of Yith to sea-beds dry.

IV

On rounded turrets rising through the visne
 Of cloud-veiled aeons that the Old Ones knew;
 On tables deeply worn and fingered clean
 By tentacles that dreamers seldom view;
 In space-hung Yith, on clammy walls obscene 5
 That writhe and crumble and are built anew;
 There is a figure carved; but God! those eyes,
 That sway on fungoid stems at leaden skies!

V

Around the place of ancient, waiting blight;
 On walls of sheerest opal rearing high,
 That move as planets beckon in the night
 To faded realms where nothing sane can lie;
 A deathless guard tramps by in feeble light, 5
 Emitting to the stars a sobbing cry.
 But on that path where footsteps should have led
 There rolled an eyeless, huge and bloated head.

VI

Amid dim hills that poison mosses blast,
 Far from the lands and seas of our clean earth,
 Dread nightmare shadows dance—obscenely cast
 By twisted talons of archæan birth
 On rows of slimy pillars stretching past 5
 A daemon-fane that echoes with mad mirth.
 And in that realm sane eyes may never see—
 For black light streams from skies of ebony.

VII

On those queer mountains which hold back the horde
 That lie in waiting in their mouldy graves,
 Who groan and mumble to a hidden lord
 Still waiting for the time-worn key that saves;
 There dwells a watcher who can ill afford
 To let invaders by those hoary caves.
 But some day then may dreamers find the way
 That leads down elfin-painted paths of gray.

5

VIII

And past those unclean spires that ever lean
 Above the windings of unpeopled streets;
 And far beyond the walls and silver screen
 That veils the secrets of those dim retreats,
 A scarlet pathway leads that some have seen
 In wildest visions that no mortal greets.
 And down that dimming path in fearful flight
 Queer beings squirm and hasten in the night.

5

IX

High in the ebon skies on scaly wings
 Dread batlike beasts soar past those towers gray
 To peer in greedy longing at the things
 Which sprawl in every twisted passageway.
 And when their gruesome flight a shadow brings
 The dwellers lift dim eyes above the clay.
 But lidded bulbs close heavily once more;
 They wait—for Sotho to unlatch the door!

5

X

Now, through the veil of troubled visions deep
 Is draped to blind me to the secret ways
 Leading through blackness to the realm of sleep
 That haunts me all my jumbled nights and days,
 I feel the dim path that will let me keep
 That rendezvous in Yith where Sotho plays.
 At last I see a glowing turret shine,
 And I am coming, for the key is mine!

5