

**THE PROVING OF
GENNAD:
A MYTHOLOGICAL
ROMANCE**

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The Proving of Gennad: A Mythological Romance by Landed Lewis

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BY
LANDRED LEWIS.

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THE PROVING OF GENNAD.

PROLOGUE.

THE ADVANCE OF NIGHT.

THE sun had borne his glory past the sea,
And given Night to stay the fretting world.
I watched his brim the waters touch—then, turning,
Lo, straight the Eastern gates were oped afar,
And onward, lo, resistless Night came through,
Her rule to claim! Before her feet there flowed
The darkness for a pathway, and behind
Where she had trod—where late bright sunbeams lit
The glittering fields—now, like a sepulchre,
No sign disclosing of the life it held,
There lay the vast O'ershadowed, and therein
The live and dead were clasped alike, the bond
And free, the passing and the past away,
The calm and fretful. As when oft the earth,
Gathering the waters wide across her breast,

Is cloaked in robes of rain—so now there fell
The wrapping darkness thick from heaven,—and all
Was hid from view.

Onward from shore to sea
She strode, and fast the lingering daylight fled
Before her feet to westward, and meanwhile
Upon the world grew silence at her tread
As she drew nigh.

And then full soon I saw
The myrmidons of Night which under her
Hold rule—Repose and Peace and healing Sleep,
With Dreams and Visions, Guile, untimely Death,
And Shame and Infamy, with others—these
Their various censers each came ghostly waving
Over us men. But the shy, hiding stars,
No more outrivall'd by the absorbing globe
Which rules the day, asserting their small light,
Re-set the dismal sky with a bright throng—
Like watch-fires on the plain . . . viewed afar!

THE MINSTREL.

' Give the old man way. Bring him in, bring him in !
He hath a goodly tale to break to-night.
Heap the logs, friends ; he's chilled. Bring forth the best
Of our rich island wine.

Now let the wolf

Howl his low bark—we'll hunt him down to-morrow !
Tho' the cold snow-drifts rise—we're warm within !
Drifting the windows up—there's firelight here !
Lead him across the hall, Upharsis, gently ;
Bring him seat here. So ! Lift his harp with care.—
Now, good old wanderer, what say'st thou to-night ?

I.

THE DECREE OF ZEUS.

At last the thunder broke ; the immortals rose ;
The Olympian halls grew hushed, and silence spread
From thence to wide around—when Zeus to them
Spake thus : ‘ Justice and Equity do sit
At my right hand as arbiters supreme,
To mould and seal my every action, ere
It rushes forth as model to the worlds
Wherever Reason dwelleth, and to be
The embodiment of what they call the Good.
Wrought I a deed unjust,
The earth would start, and Heaven would heave amain,
And stand aghast at such proceeding, while
The murmur from the thousand thousand rising,
Would stop Creation's harmony ! Hear now.
This mortal, by Athene's witness found
Guilty of base impiety—while him
The words of Aphrodite do defend—

It is by you declared he must become
 As one of us, immortal,—or must die.
Wherefore he shall be tried. Prince Gennad, son
 Of Gelanor—his life within his hands—
 Shall walk past seven fires, shall keep himself
 Thro' seven keen temptations, one by one,
 Which being truly vanquished (he meanwhile
 Of the issues thence depending knowing not),
 He shall be worthy, and found worthy, live
 Immortally.'

Cried Pallas: 'If for man
 'Tis meet to seek what solely rightly homes
 Above—to view what hath by mortal ne'er
 Been eyed—then what doth trespass make? Witness,
 Ye gods, all outraged standing! Death for him
 Forthwith, who arm hath lifted past the line
 'Twixt us and yonder beating! Let him die.'

But Aphrodite started like a hind:
 'Ye gods, what trespass this, that man should seek
 The eternal ranges? Who for such hath died?
 Many have sought, some even reached, while all
 Desire.—And we do love to have it so.'

In majesty the King of gods and men
 Sat throned serene, and ruling o'er the worlds
 Of Earth and Heaven. Thus proceeded he:
 'Behold, yon mortal shall be tried by Fear;

By Ease seduced ; by Anger tempted, which
The kindly Pity stayeth. He doth go
Thro' Labour, and thro' Reverence, patiently
Waiting upon the gods to honour them.
He shall be forged by Pain ; and he shall slay
The Gorgon which ten years the isle of Sardo
Hath roamed in fairest woman's shape, to feed
Upon the blood of countless lovers. This—
This last shall be his aim as known to him—
All else lies dark. Hence to the issue then !
Forth from the Eternal none shall thrust a hand
To help or stay—no god shall interpose ;
But he must walk the fiery drench alone,
Girded in mortal strength, alone to prove
Its weal or woe. Thus I have said. Enough—
To each his way ! Who shall undarken further
What I have bid the Night gauze over ?