

**EROS & PSYCHE; A
POEM IN
TWELVE MEASURES**

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Eros & Psyche; a poem in twelve measures by Robert Seymour Bridges & Apuleius

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ROBERT SEYMOUR BRIDGES & APULEIUS

**EROS & PSYCHE; A
POEM IN
TWELVE MEASURES**

EROS & PSYCHE

A POEM IN TWELVE MEASURES

BY

ROBERT BRIDGES

THE STORY DONE IN-
TO ENGLISH FROM THE
LATIN OF APULEIUS

*Esce di mano a Lui che la vagheggia
Prima che sia, a guisa di fanciulla
Che piangendo e ridendo pargoleggia,
L'anima semplicetta che sa nulla,
Salvo che, mossa da lieto Fattore,
Volentier torna a ciò che la trastulla.*

LONDON: GEORGE BELL AND SONS

1885

DEDICATED
TO
THE CELESTIAL SPIRIT
OF
HENRY PURCELL
BY
AN UNWORTHY LOVER.

Τὸν μὲν ἄγων ἃ̄ ξεῖτε καὶ οὐ παροῦντ'
ὀνομάζειν

ΑΙΔΕΟΜΑΙ.





MEASURE I.

1.



IN midmost length of hundred-citied
Crete,
The land that cradled Zeus, of old renown;
Where first Demeter nurseried her wheat,
And Minos fashioned Law, ere he went down
To judge the shrinking hordes of Hell's domain;
There dwelt a King on the Omphalian plain
Eastward of Ida, in a little town.

2.

Three daughters had this King, of whom my tale
Time hath preserved, that loveth to despise
The wealth which men misdeem of much avail,
Their glories for themselves that they devise;
For clerkly is he, old hard-featured Time,
And poets' fabled song, and lovers' rhyme
He storeth on his shelves to please his eyes.

B

3.

These three princesses all were fairest fair ;
And of the elder twain 'tis truth to say
That if they stood not quite above compare,
Yet in their prime they bore the palm away,
Outwards of loveliness ; but Nature's mood,
Gracious to make, had grudgingly endued
And marred by gifting ill the beauteous clay.

4.

And being in honour they were well content
To feed on lovers' looks and courtly smiles,
To hang their necks with jewelled ornament,
And gold, that vanity in vain beguiles,
And live in gaze, and take their praise for due,
To be the peerless fairest then to view
Within the shores of Greece and all her isles.

5.

But of that youngest one, the third princess,
There is no likeness ; since she was as far
Removed from beauty as is ugliness,

Though on the side where heavenly wonders are,
Ideals out of being and above,
Which music worships, but if love should love,
'Tis, as the poet saith, to love a star.

6.

Her vision rather drave from passion's heart
What earthly soil it had afore possessed ;
Since to man's purer unsubstantial part
The brightness of her presence was addressed :
And such as scoffed at God, when once they saw
Her heavenly glance were shamed and stood in awe,
And turned to things unseen and praised the Best.

7.

And so before her, wheresoe'er she went,
Stilling the crowd a sacred whisper ran ;
And voices hushed, heads bowed, and knees were bent,
And hands upraised ; and thence this tale began,
That Love's own mother had come down on earth,
Sweet Cytherea, or a wondrous birth
Had given an equal Goddess unto man.

8.

Then Aphrodite's statue in its place
Stood clear of worshippers ; if Cretans prayed
For beauty or for children, love or grace,
Their vows and prayers were offered to the maid ;
Unto the maid their hymns of praise were sung,
Their victims bled for her, for her were hung
Their garlands, heaped their gifts, and none forbade.

9.

And thence opinion spread beyond the shores,
From isle to isle the wonder flew, it came
Across the Ægæan on a thousand oars,
And furthest lands echoed the virgin's fame ;
Until throughout all Greece the foamborn queen
Was scarce adored, or paid with rites so mean
As rather served the more to seal her shame.

10.

No longer to high Paphos now 'twas sailed ;
The fragrant altar by the Graces served
Was nigh of men forsaken ; pilgrims failed