

**CIRCE: A
DRAMATIC
FANTASY, PP.1-176**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649530816

Circe: A Dramatic Fantasy, pp.1-176 by Isaac Flagg

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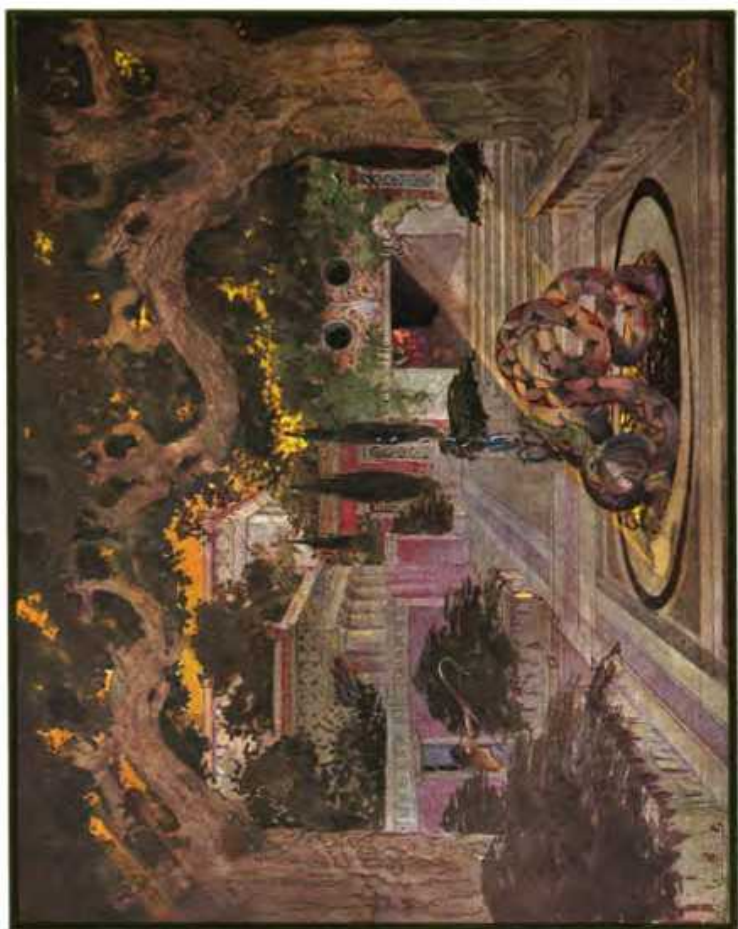
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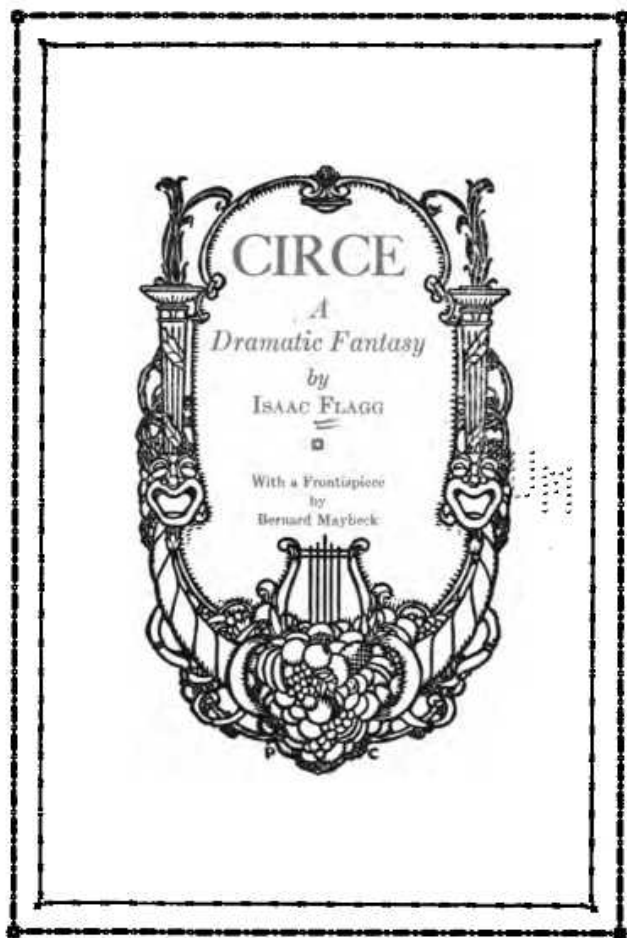
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Oct 16 1854

To
MABEL LAMMÉ HAYS
*Rarest of enchantment deem
The beginning and the end :
At life's morning in the dream,
At life's evening in the friend.*

Mr. Geo. Briggs 11 13 1854

PRINTED AND BOUND BY
THE ROTCROFTERS
EAST AURORA, NEW YORK





THE ARGUMENT

HOMER relates that Ulysses, king of Ithaca in Greece, sailing homeward after the capture of Troy, drifted into unknown seas in consequence of the wrath of Neptune; and after losing all but one of his twelve ships, landed with the sole remaining vessel upon the island of the

enchantress Circe, who transformed one-half of his ship's company, twenty-two in number, into swine. He relates further that Ulysses, apprised by Mercury of the fate of his companions, and furnished by the god with an antidote for the spells of the sorceress, compelled her to restore his men to their human shape. Thereupon, at the invitation of Circe the rest of the crew join their mates at her palace, where all spend a year in festivity and merry-making before proceeding on their way with precise instructions from the Enchantress regarding the homeward voyage.

The experiences of Ulysses and his followers, as described in the *Odyssey*, immediately previous to their arrival at the Isle of Circe, had been of an extraordinary and alarming character. A number of men had been devoured by Polyphemus the Cyclops in his cave, where he had entrapped a party, the survivors escaping by riding out, clasped under the bellies of his sheep, after they had made the monster drunk and blinded his one eye with a fiery stake. Later, they came to the domain of Æolus, king of the winds, who

presented Ulysses with a number of bags holding the adverse winds in confinement. But during the sleep of their commander, when already near their native shore, some of the men through curiosity untying the bags, the winds broke loose and swept them back to Æolus, who drove them all forth with contempt. They next encountered the Læstrygones, a race of man-eating giants. Being shown the way to the town by a daughter of the giant king, some men were seized and devoured on the spot; while from an attack made upon the ships collected in the harbor only one vessel succeeded in escaping.

No mention is made of Penelope, the wife of Ulysses, at any point in the story of Circe; but we read that Ulysses lingered in the enchanted island, until his men were finally compelled, seizing an opportunity when Circe was away, to remonstrate with their chief and rouse him to thoughts of a return to his home.

Homer says that the attendants of the Enchantress in her palace were nymphs, such as derive their being from the fountains, the groves, and the rivers flowing to the sea.

The First Act of the play brings Ulysses and his companions into Circe's palace; the Second Act takes them out of it.

