

**THE REVELLERS, THE
MIDNIGHT SEA,
AND THE WANDERER.
THREE ALLEGORIES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649692880

The Revellers, The Midnight Sea, and the Wanderer. Three Allegories by Edward A. Monro

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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EDWARD A. MONRO

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Three Allegories.

BY THE

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LONDON:
JOSEPH MASTERS, ALDERSGATE STREET,
AND 78, NEW BOND STREET.

MDCCLXIX.



LONDON:
PRINTED BY JOSEPH MASTERS,
ALDERGATE STREET.

THE REVELLERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE WARNING VOICE.

"I say unto all, Watch!"

I THOUGHT I was walking through a valley on a summer's evening; it was surrounded by hills covered with the most verdant and lovely slopes eye ever rested on; woods of every tender colour, and banks of flowers, which fringed a delicious stream in the middle, met my eye at every turn. The trees were cut into glades green and grassy, which were lost in the deep shadows of the overhanging boughs. But I could see nothing beyond. The blue sky was on all sides set in the varied edges of the summer foliage, like a fair picture in a vast frame.

At the end of this valley I saw a stately palace, surrounded with tall pillars and snowy porticoes, on which the full red rays of the declining

sun were falling in all their lustre: flights of steps, the tops of which were lost in wandering flowers and shrubs, here and there met my eye, and far above the stately boughs of the trees rose the upper part of the building. When I first entered this beautiful valley, it was sleeping in the most soft and gentle light which summer's evening could shed on tree, and leaf, and mossy bank, and purple hill. I was so delighted with its beauty, that I lingered continually along the windings of the blue river which wound its way through sandy shores and bushy slopes, while on its glassy surface the boughs of a hundred trees far and near were painted in every hue which the sun of summer could shed upon it.

The air was still, and strange bright birds spread their soft wings along the sky, while others shot with arrowy flight along the verdant branches; insects mused with jewelled wings around heads of flowers which stood in wild succession along the river's bank, as if they were lingering to listen to the music of the stream. Far up the valley the tall snow-white pillars of the palace were reflected in the river's face, and the roses which hung in luxuriant clusters around them, were painted in scarlet stars upon the clear surface.

But as yet in this valley I saw no human being, and I wondered a place so lovely could be for the enjoyment of insects, whose life is but till evening, and the arrowy flight of the glittering birds.

While I was thinking this, an old man, exceed-

ing reverend, with his hair as white as the mountain snow, and the weight of eighty years upon his furrowed brow, with his hand leaning on a staff and his pilgrim's dress drawn loosely round him, came forward from the wood towards the river, and having gazed for a few moments at the wandering water in an attitude of deep meditation, he turned, with a sigh, towards a stone under the shadow of the trees, and sat down, with his head leaning on his staff. I drew towards him. He looked up as I approached, and seemed about to rise, but I motioned to him that he should not, and spoke to him.

"Sir," said I, "can you tell me aught as to this secluded valley and yon fair palace? It surprises me so lovely a spot should remain so secluded."

The old man paused a moment, time enough for me to admire his calm eye and chastened expression.

"Your question is hard to answer at a word; may be, if you will be content to linger here with me a few hours, till yonder sun has gone down, you will judge better as to your question than you would from word of mine."

I thanked him, and told him I was a pilgrim, with but little to hurry me, and would gladly accept his offer; and accordingly sat me down by his side.

The old man said, "In brief, I would tell you that this valley is called the Valley of Life, and yonder fair palace is called the Temple of the World, and

belongs to the Lord of Life, who owns this whole domain. A Revel will be there to-night, for the Lord is away, but he will return before morning to this valley, though at what hour it is uncertain; it may be at midnight, or at the first cry of the early bird, or in the morning; and when he comes, those who live in this valley are expected to meet him, to go back with him to his own country; and this valley will then become a wilderness."

The old man sighed, and fixing his eye on the wandering water, seemed wrapped up in sad thoughts.

"And you?" asked I with some hesitation.

"And I am placed here by the Lord to warn his subjects to be on the watch for his appearing."

"But do they need it," said I with some surprise, "when the time is so short for his arrival, and the reward so high for those who watch?"

"It is even so," answered he; "as your own eye will presently tell you; indeed, this revel to-night runs great risk for all concerned in it."

I was deeply struck with the old man's words, and there was a silence, when, on a sudden, voices struck on my ear, and forth from the wood and under the boughs, which burnt with the evening light, two figures approached the spot where we were standing.

One was of a youth, tall and exceeding beautiful, and on his arm leant a lady, whose graceful form scarce touched the flowers she swept; each was dressed in the purest white, and around the lady's