

The Stone A Priestess of Cybele.

Carbonic

Crowned with ^{fillet} ~~with~~ upon a ~~tormented~~ ~~circle~~ of gold that bound her ^{wise}-dark hair, the girl Colys ~~had~~ ^{fixed} her ~~violet~~ eyes upon the ~~restless~~ sea, that heaved with slow and oily prescience of storm. On the horizon all was deep orange; above, the clouds were uniform in blue-black darkness, pregnant with water and with thunder.

Colys was tall and straight ^{and slender}, a young arrow from a rainbow; for there was in her something utterly remote from ~~human~~ the life of the world. Her robe was of fine silk, ^{can} ~~deep~~-green with purple reflections; and in it in dull

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gold, were bordered hairs. The colour melted
imperceptibly into her skin; for that too
was like the wig itself, flushing into ~~purple~~
~~the~~ amethyst, and paling into amber.

and in her eyes the light of the whole
night of heaven ~~burnt~~^{burnt} in majesty;
there were pride, and subtle joy, and the
anguish of an infinite longing, wrought
to a single gem of inscrutable Will.

But in that Will one read no hope, not
even desire. ~~His mystery was hers, that~~
~~to one who looked~~

~~for love, hate would glow steadfast~~
~~in smouldering ecstasy; to one who~~
~~looked for hate, love would break~~
~~sublime flames of unlit shade.~~

The ^{ambitious} ~~ambitious~~ day suited her nature; she loved to dream decisive things.

~~But she was~~ She stood upon the edge of the tall cliff, her slim fingers loosing the wind that poured between them. But her thoughts were far beyond the horizon; they saw a field hospital on the field, and a man dying. She had come out from the great lonely house ^{of Polpenning that crowned} the black headland to realize her loss. The words of her father's last letter were sobbing in her brain. On the oak table of the refectory she had left the large official envelope, with the Council notification

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4) of Colonel Fleich's death, the letters of sympathy from the General and other of his fellow-officers, his father's letter, and a key.

Thoussen tells me I have few hours to live; he had written. Dennis has every thing in order; you will have about £3000
£10,000 cash to Claude, for Marcins's sake;
a year; the rest in trust for Regulus. You are 24; I have made you sole executrix. I know you worthy of all trust. You have been every thing to me since your mother died.

I also give you charge of more than money. The key enclosed unlocks a safe hidden beneath the big table in my library in the Paris house.

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5.

There is the hearloom of the world. You know
we are of the Flacci; Horace himself was
of our kin. One of us, C. Valerius, at the
siege of Rome by ^{the} Gauls, took the
sacred stone of Cybele from the temple
of Victory on the Mons Palatinus. Never
yet now has our race failed of an adult
male heir. The stone goes to Regulus when
he is 21. And now farewell; I am
glad I died fighting.

The General's letter added to her pride;
at the critical moment of the day,
Colonel Flash had led his hussars
in a mad charge against entrenched
positions. It had succeeded, broken

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The ^{enemy's} centre and their commander's
nerve at the same moment; it had
won the field. The Victoria Cross had been pinned
to that gallant breast, before it breathed its last.

The storm had been heavy; Colby's was
recalled to herself, by heavy drops on
her bare head; she turned and
walked to the house. Here she
changed her dress for black; as she
came down into the hall she found her
betrothed, the Hon and Rev Joseph Randolph
Forsythe, a stalwart claymore of
thirty years of age. He took her in his
arms in silence; her dress told him
that she knew already what he had
come to break to her.

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Fortescue, a stalwart claymore an of
thirty years of age. He took her in his
arms in silence; her dress told him
that she knew already what he had
come to break to her.

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He honoured her for her steel strength,
the Roman spirit yet alive and vigorous.

She did not even show him the General's
letter; she handed him her letters' only.

When he gave it back, she simply said,
"I must go to Rome and see Regulus, to

London and transact what is necessary
with Deanes, then to Paris to take charge

there. I shall be back in a month or
six weeks." The clergyman began to talk

of their wedding; the idea had been to
wait for Colonel Fleck's return, which
had been expected, with the happy

turn of the campaign, in another

six months' time. Fortune reminded

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The girl that she was young and an orphan;
a husband seemed obviously expedient.

She asked him to defer the discussion
until her return from Paris. Presently
the vicar took his leave; he kissed her
several times farewell, for she was going
to start very early in the morning and
~~the vicar~~ Fortescue, who lived ten
miles way, had an early celebration.

As he went he wondered in himself
a little. She is marvellous, he thought,
the beauty of Spring itself, the dignity
and distinction and reserve of the
ideal ~~look~~ ^{châtelaine} of a great house; but

9.
which stood on the very brink of Montmartre. From the window we saw clear over Paris, from the Dame to the Trocadero.

— was she capable of passion? She had accepted him at once, yielded spontaneously to his first masterful caress; and yet — and yet — it seemed but a duty perfectly fulfilled. The thought of Ferrigno's line — "perfect, faultily faultless, splendidly well" — and then he smiled; she was one of those women — the best kind — that awaken only on marriage. They flower late, then out for all, a curious bloom of glory, herald of the finest fruit of what he called "God's orchard."

II

Claude de Bry was making tea for Cotys in his studio. Marcia

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III

Claude de Bry was making tea for Colby in his studio. Marcia

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Colonel Flach's sister, had married for love into a noble French family of only moderate means. The result had been unfortunate; love soon cooled, even before the birth of Claude, and a quarrel had only been averted by the death of the husband. It was said that at a somewhat wild party he had bucked himself to swim the Seine on the best horse he could pick up in a Lincoln.

~~The~~ Boy however, he had been drowned. Marcia died when Claude, now 28, was ten years old. The boy had been brought up by Colonel Flach, sent to Winchester and Oxford, but they had never

"I got on well together. Claude was not really deformed, but he gave that impression; his head was large, his face abominably ugly in a savage surly fashion, his body squat and his limbs too long and strong to harmonize with them. At school and college he had done only the minimum work necessary to pass examinations; he toiled incessantly at sculpture, and when his muscles wearied he read the classics. He could read and speak Latin and Greek more easily than English, and refused to take classics for his examination on the ground that the University was totally ignorant

of the subject. He played no games; he would not row; and he avoided the other men. His only friend at Maydalen was a blind boy, ^(named Hughes) son of a Cabinet minister, whose ~~the~~ ^{first} pleasure was the flute. De Bry called him Mersyas, and bade him play while he sculpted. On the lady's side his joy was great to run his fingers over Claude's modellings; he made a master critic.

Coty had not been encouraged to see much of Claude; she remembered him only from one Commemorat in Week, when she had certainly succumbed to his extraordinary power and

fascination. He knew exactly what all the other people did not know; and his ignorance of what they did know was almost equally enchanting.

So it was with very pleasant anticipations that she went to see him on an errand that could not fail to please - the announcement of a very unexpected legacy of \$10,000 to her out the two or three hundreds a year that his parents had left him.

Claude was sitting on a divan covered with grey fur, his legs crossed under him; Coly sat opposite in

an enormous arm chair of grey velvet.

Everything in the studio was grey; the floor, the walls, the hangings, the very plaster casts had been toned down to harmony.

Only at the end of the room was a

great gate of bronze, Claude's own work,

a dark trellis covered with green vines that bore ~~and~~ bunches of grapes in purple patina.

Coly, knowing his taste for classics, recounted her investigations in her father's library.

The stone of Cybele, she said, was jet black, rather like a sugar-loaf in shape, set in a plain stand of gold with the words AVE

MATER DEORVM deeply chafed.

"Coty" said Claude "I want you to give me your most serious attention. You are now the representative of the eldest branch of the Flacci - I should have the stone if Regulus dies or fails of heirs, which he won't, so never mind that - but on you at this moment hangs the responsibility of the family honour. I know ^{that} that is more to you than anything on earth." Coty nodded gravely. "Now" continued Claude more seriously still "I believe the chance is now in your hands to do something which has not been

thought of for fifteen centuries - to achieve
 the end for which ~~the~~ ^{our} race has been
 preserved in honour for so long." The
 girl was surprised, but deeply impressed;
 Claude's eyes sank into hers, and
 conquered them.

"I will tell you something about that stone
 said he "which you know, but which you
 do not know you know. Come over here!"

He led her to a bust of grey
 marble, put her hand upon the head.

She stared, incomprehending. "Nothing
 happens?" "Nothing." "Well, this
 is what happened yesterday. You
 told me that you took the stone in

We began to recite Sun-Tsun's verses:

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your hands, and carried it to the light to
read the inscription. "Yes." "Well, you
never told me that you put down the
stone because it became hot." She
flushed violently. "I'd absolutely
forgotten; but it's true. How - oh how
did you know?" "I know more than that.
For an instant you went giddy; perhaps
you even heard or saw something." "I had
a stupid fancy." "It's a long shot; but
perhaps you saw a valley dark with
trees, and women with torches, and ^{heard} the
noises of cymbals and drums." "You're
a thought-reader, Claude!" she
laughed. "I do remember something like

He began to recite Sumner's verses:

Quote I. before S. p. 5. "We too have tramped 'down to #6" "Peace"

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you hands, and caused it to be by it to
read the inscription. "Yes." "Well, you
were told me that you had down the
stone because it became hot "She
tramped vicariously. "I'd absolutely
forgot it; but it's time. How - oh how
did you know?" "I know more than that.
For we understand you went piddly; he'd
you seen heard or saw something "I had
a "trip's fancy " "I's a long shot; but
perhaps you saw a valley dark with
trees, and women with torches, and the
voices of gurgles and hums " "You're
a thought-remember, Cleve! "The
longed "I do remember something like

We began to recite Sun-Tsun's verses:

Quole T. before S. p. 5. We too have traced "down to 966" "Theace"

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your hands, and carried it to the light to
read the inscription. "Yes." "Well, you
never told me that you put down the
stone because it became hot." She
flushed violently. "I'd absolutely
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But now you tell me, like a dream that
comes back suddenly sometimes in the
afternoon. But it's all absolutely vague;
you know, your saying it may have made
me think I remember it. That happens
sometimes. - "I'm glad you're sceptical; now
I can demand to see a proof." "It's true;
you don't know how keen I am; you've thoroughly
aroused my curiosity." "Then come here
to-morrow afternoon at 5, as soon as
my models' gone. I'll have Hughes here;
you met him at Oxford that year; the
blind boy, you know; he plays the
flute better than ever. And bring the
stone. ~~It's~~ I needn't tell you to be
careful; come in a car all the way."

19.

"So I will. And now vale - do I pronounce it right?" and she laughed her way into the street.

III

On her return to the house Colys found a letter from Fortescue. It was long, and curiously devotional; it made her rather ashamed; she had been neglecting the offices of religion in her preoccupation with the details of business - the care of great estates thus suddenly thrust on her. She tried to make up for lost time, but her thoughts kept wandering to the stone of Cybele. Presently she had an overmastering impulse to take

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out the stone and handle it and find out
whether it were truth or imagination or
coincidence, the heat, the goldsmiths, the
half-seen vision. Her feet carried her to
the library door, but her hand refused to
open it. The inhibition was absolute. She
stayed there several minutes, incapable of
action; then, impatient and disgusted at her
own oscillation, went determinedly to her
bedroom, took her hat, and, summoning her
maid, went out into the Champs-Élysées.
→ Half-an-hour's brisk walk quieted her
nerves; she went home, and slept
like a child.

The next day she was at the studio

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Half-an-hour's brisk walk quieted her
nerves; she went home, and slept
like a child.

The next day she was at the studio

with the stone. She had not removed it
 from the casket in which it reposed. Claude
 and Hyacinth were waiting for her. ^{They were clad in the costumes of pagan priests of Rome. She had half expected something of the sort.} "Come,"

you know Margy as "my all her cousin
 said. "I am going to be burque; this is family
 business. Please sit on this stool." He
 indicated one with three legs. In front of it
 was a square tray, full of earth. "I want
 you to do me rather strange thing," he said.
 "Please take off your shoes and stockings,
 and put your bare feet on this soil. It
 comes from Rome, from the very spot where
 the Temple of Victory once stood." She
 made a little more, decided that
 there was no harm in it with her cousin

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with the stone. She had not removed it
from the casket in which it reposed. Claude
^{They were clad in the costumes of pagan priests of Rome. She had} and Hyacinth were waiting for her. ^{half expected something of the sort.} "Coty's,

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from the casket in which it reposed. Claude
^{They were clad in the costumes of pagan priests of Rome. She had}
and Hughes were waiting for her. ^{half expectal something the rest,} "Coty's,

You know Maryas" was all her cousin
said. "I am going to be brusque; this is family
business. Please sit on this stool." He
indicated one with three legs. In front of it
was a square tray, full of earth. "I want
you to do me rather strange thing" he said
"Please take off your shoes and stockings,
and put your bare feet on this soil. It
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comes from Rome, from the very spot where

the Temple of Victory once stood. "She

made a little more, decided that

there was no harm in it with her cousin

and a blind man, replied. "Put your right hand on this tree" he went on. It was a very young pine, the trunk swathed in wool, and decked with wreaths of violets; on the stem, about half-way up, the figure of a youth, one of Claudes' own sculptures in wood, was fastened by silken cords.

"What is your Christian name?" asked the sculptor. "Coty," answered the girl; then hesitatingly added "well, I'm afraid that isn't a Christian name; it's pagan!"

"Then you have no Christian name?"

"I suppose not." "Very good; here is the stone. Take your hand from the tree; hold the stone in both hands, and

"Kiss it." "I don't know why I'm doing this; it's silly and unnatural, and yet it's all familiar." "Familiar is the next best thing," said Hughes, who had till then been silent; "it is in the family, in the blood of the Flacci!" Coly's raised the stone to her lips. "Splendid" cried Claude after a moment "she has kissed it eleven times. Already she remembers!" "The stone is hot," said Coly's "but it will not burn me. I'm fire of fire." Claude instantly placed a wreath of ^{wig} in her head. She did not seem to notice it. "My limbs are ~~to~~ slow," she muttered "they have slept too long."

Suddenly she changed her tone, became abrupt, unceremonious, angry. "You are no priest of mine" she cried. "have I no priest on earth? Open my sanctuary!" Claude shook his head. "I am the high priest of Demeter" was his answer.

"I am the high priest of Apollo" said Hughes.

Coty's nose, with a fierce and determined look upon her face. "I am the priestess of Cybele" she said "and I will open her shrine and re-enthrone the sacred stone!" She went down upon her knees and placed the stone upon the earth. Then with sudden and utter virginal ardour, she stripped off her dress, leaving only the long scarf of slaty

25 / purple and sub-green with ^{its} embroidery of dull gold, that she had worn ^{on} her shoulders.

This she wrapped about her body, dipped, took up the stone — "Phallophore!" she cried with a spasm that shook her whole body.

Something seemed to have been let loose in her at the word. Claude took up the

line-shaft, began to move toward the bronze gates. Merygas began to play

upon his flute, a low melody, with strange heretotimes and dashes, quivering as it would. — T. This dandied Colys, always

decorous, always self-entertained. Claude

did not move in a straight line. He

26 / traced a complex pattern in the floor. It was
a quarter of an hour before he reached the gates.
Coty's was riveting in every limb. When the
gates opened, she gasped. Then Claude lifted his
voice; in resounding Greek he cried aloud
"Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye
lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the Queen
of Glory shall come in."

Hyphes now pulled back the gates; Coty's
advanced, and Glory herself before the
altar which she found there, placing
the sacred stone of Cybele in its centre.

She began to utter strange words in
a strange tongue. Her speech was
thick and hoarse, charged with

2) lightning, like the flashes of the head of
a poisonous snake. She rose; she began to
dance, no more in stately reverence, but
wildly and indecently. The Duke of Burgundy
gave the measure; her cousin struck bronze
cymbals, and beat upon a kettle drum.
Suddenly she fell upon her back, her arms
stretched out, even as he his head. The
breath choked in her throat, then seemed to
stop. The music ceased. Claude and his
friend went to the altar; all was silence,
all rapt intensity.

Coly's came to herself. She had
forgotten everything. When she saw
where she was lying, she thought it

250

was a dream.

The room was small; the altar was a cube supported by four lions rampant. It was ^{enshrouded} ~~clothed~~ within a canopy of bronze. Behind it,

midway

and divided, was a great square with a circle inscribed in it; within the circle, the 'man of Vitruvius' that figure which is called

the measure of heaven and earth. Banding

and holding it near this were two gynecic goddess-figures

wrought into niches of such simplicity

of obscurity that Colys could not

understand; she only felt the horror.

The full tide of the reaction had set in;

she knew that she had been wise, that some far taint in her blood had

mastered her. She looked at the

mastered her. She looked at the

Two men with shunting horror. Claude looked steadily at her. "Priestess of Cybele," said he, "what follows?"

Coty's revolted violently. She sprang to her feet; unsteadily enough. She appealed to her religion; she made the sign of the cross. It only traced the figure of the 'man of

Vitruvius!'. "Our Father which art in heaven" she began, despairing. Again

she saw the 'man of Vitruvius'; and

in her hysterical state, thought that he took the phrase to himself, and smiled at her. She saw that every

modern thought was only a copy of some ancient thought, and she knew herself vowed in her blood to the old gods.

"I am lost" she said quite quietly "I am
 Cybele's. Bring me the knife; bring me the
 wine." Claude took a gilded silver bowl
 wide and flat
 from the outstretched hand of one of the
 bronze goddesses; from the other a dagger.
 "We do not know" said he "and I ask
 pardon of the gods, and pray enlightenment—
 we do not know what was the wine of
 Cybele; this wine must serve. It was a
 clear white liquid that he poured into
 the bowl. In its luminosity the nymphs
 and satyrs that he had chased from it
 seemed to renew their pictured eyes of
 drunkenness and lust. Colys took the
 dagger, and the wrists of the two men.
 She cut her own arm and then theirs,

holding their hands so that the three rivulets
 of blood were confluent to one. Then she
 took the ivy from her brows, and licked it
 twice. She took a leaf and put it
 in each mouth; then closed her hands in
 the two heads, and the three bowed themselves
 above the surface of the liquor. She caught
 her breath, ^{with} chinking; the fumes were suffocating.
 She set her teeth upon the ivy, and ^{held} fast;
 presently the great change began. She
 grew rosy and brilliant; the whole
 temple seemed alive with ^{inward} heavenly beauty;
 she began to sob in her excitement;
 stronger and deeper grew her breath as
 she inhaled the ether. Soon all three

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 above the surface of the liquor. She caught
 her breath, ^{to} chinking; the fumes were suffocating.
 She set her teeth upon the ivy, and grasped it;
 presently the great change began. She
 grew rosy and brilliant; the whole
 temple seemed alive with marvellous beauty;
 she began to sob in the excitement;
 stronger and deeper grew her breath as
 she inhaled the ether. Soon all three

were lying prone, their faces pressed close
 to the surface of the liquor of Cybele, sucking
 the vapour by great draughts into their
 lungs, with open mouths, their fingers
 clench'd, their veins boiling with the
 madness of that supreme intoxication.

~~Then~~ The world was blotted out for her;
 she knew nothingness, a vast blind
 space, sprinkled with a few points of
 brilliant light. She drew the vapour
 fiercely through her throat; the rare stus
 played, blasted the blackness out of
 being. Raving with the splendor and
 ecstasy of it, she saw suddenly
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 being. Raving with the splendour and
 ecstasy of it, she saw suddenly
 that she must go mad, that it

was not for mortals to endure
 such brilliance. She cried out in Cybele
 "Let that be which must be." Instantly
 a new passion smote her: what new
 rite was ~~due~~ ^{owed} to ~~the~~ the infernal, the
 inexorable goddess? What hideous parody
 of the most sacred and mysterious doctrine
 of the Christian faith was enacted in
 that temple of abominations?

Quem si puellarum insereres choro
 Mire sagacis falleret hospites:
 Discrimen obscurum, solutis
 Crinibus, ambiguoque vultu.

Christian Socialism. People claim to believe
 in destiny, and yet take pains to decide on
 their actions; others say that faith moves
 mountains, but never think of trying to remove
 so much as a grain of dust in the eye
 by so wilfully economical and painless a
 method. Again, we make vital changes
 in our lives, and it takes us years to
 realize the bearings of them; and as ^{that} some
 great philosopher, ^{Henry Higgins in Pygmalion,} ~~has said that great men say~~
^{"Do any}
~~Higgins in Pygmalion,~~ has said ~~that~~
^{has understood what we are} ^{If we did,}
~~has said that we are doing?~~ ^{would we ever}
 do it?"

Coty's ~~Flora~~, masters of Cybele, never
 thought of interfering with the plans of
 Miss Fleech of Polpenning; and Miss

Clark did not realize that her initiation into paganism meant more to her than taking up golf might have done. It was because the violation had been so deep that it showed no wave upon the surface.

But the Hon. and Rev. Joseph Randolph Fortescue saw in her Phil letter that something had happened; a fortnight later he became seriously alarmed. He sent a telegram asking if anything was the matter. Collyer replied kindly and simply, or so she meant it; but the vicar's suspicions were only the more violently aroused. The double personality created in Collyer by her initiation was beginning to show signs of interfiltration.

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Fortescue was a man of action; he left his cure to his subordinate, and came over to Paris. Without warning he called at the house in the rue de ^{pondicherry} Pontneuf. Coby was at home; she was just dressing to go to the studio, as she did daily. The stone of Cybele, the fascination of the ether, the delirium of the savage rites, the personality of Claude, forceful and widowed, and that of Marguerite, pathetic and perverse, drew her exultant to their vortex.

Yet when her betrothal was announced, she forgot everything. She was the maiden of two months ago as she ran into the

drawing-room. "Oh Randolph, how
 perfectly sweet of you to come over. I've
 been dying to see you!" Fortune had risen
 and gone towards her; as she came near
 he suddenly drew back "My dear girl,
 what have you been doing?" "I? Nothing.
 What's wrong?" "Why, you've smothered yourself
 in mud!" "I certainly have not. How
 can you say such a thing?" She was perfectly
 sincere. "My mistake; forgive me!" answered
 Randolph, as he took her in his arms. She
 let herself go in his embrace, ^{if} he
 began to kiss her eagerly. "Here, sit
 down" she said a moment later "and

tell me all the news!" The vicar began to retail the doings of the village; Coly's stopped him. "Randolph! what's the matter with your face?" "Why, nothing! it's a rheumatism, like that horrible smell of mush!" he laughed. But he went to the mirror; she followed, her face ashen with horror. For the clear strong lines of the virile countenance were gone; the healthy pallor gone; instead, the whole skin was loose and red and bloated; horrible pimples with angry heads sprouted from it like fungi; the lips were full and puffed; a shudder began to crack and blanch before

The doctor had taken Cotys by the arm,
and hurried her from the room.

She could not even think; in the fresh
air she began to act, but automatically.
She hailed a taxicab, and bade the
man drive to the studio on the Butte
Montmartre.

Claude was there with a model. "Send
her away!" she cried, stamping with
impatience while the girl dressed and
went, in answer to his nod. The
door closed; Cotys flung herself on the
grey fur of the divan, took Claude's
hand in her hands, and poured out

41/

~~nothing but a heap of black clothes in~~

and rot their bones, my branch of poison ivy. I want you to be Colys of the Flacci, and avenge the old gods on the new." She began to breathe heavily with the mad excitement of murder-lust; her tearful power made her voice one with pride. She went to the great gates, and cried "Open, it is I, Colys of the Flacci, priestess of Cybele!" Clouds parted the doors; they sank down, before the altar, their nostrils greedily drinking up the ether of the gilded bosk.

V

It was the second summer of the revival of the worship of Cybele. No longer was the scene

of the revels sacred to those Four Eyes under which the
 initiation of Coty's had been made. Artist friends
 of Claude, his models and their mistresses, men and
 women of the best society of Paris and London,
 had joined the company. Coty had used her house
 to entertain, as a focus for gathering men and women
 into the shrine. Already branches were spreading all
 over the world. A Russian Grand Duke had
 desecrated the chapel of his palace at Moscow to
 dedicate it to Dionysus. Germany had taken up
 the old worship enthusiastically; Walpurgis night
 had come again. Certain professors had been of
 great assistance here; they had shown how all
 the quaint old customs were of Pagan origin,
 and by simply making the people conscious

of what they had always been doing, had turned
 their hearts without an effort. In London various
 pagan rites had been instituted under the thin

veil of dramatic performances. All this was

done stealthily enough; Claude and Cely hid

their true purpose from all who could not be

trusted absolutely. But at headquarters deep and

deadly work was going on. ^{Hydes} ~~She~~ had brought in

a Cardinal from South Italy, and Cely, whose

brilliance physical and mental appeared

increased an hundredfold by the extraordinary
 not only fascinated him to slavery, but
 stimulus of her enthusiasm had shown him

how the true hope for the Church lay in

the gradual return to her true character.

The Cardinal had returned to Italy; he had talked over three of his colleagues, and the General of the Society was wavering. There were tales of a Pagan Pope before the century was over.

Into his piece current of life came Riquelme on his summer holidays from the boys' school and stony, already solidly in bearing at 15 years. Coty brought him to the station on his second day in Paris. His cousins' eyes devoured him with delight, a strange light twinkling in their depths. "Coty," said he, "do you recognize why the stone slept for all those years? It was because Cybele had no priest to guard it. None of the Flaccii were capable of the

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4) /^e holy office. Only when you came the old fires
flamed again. But this boy shall be the
Priest of Cybele, and so shall we establish
the worship in the family. For he is the
first born male of the main line; him must
we consecrate. Neither of his hearers ^{fully} understood
the implication; but pride and enthusiasm
lit their faces. The boy had been prepared by
his sister for something wonderful, and
his gay adventurous spirit leaped to
meet it. There and then they put him
through the preliminary ceremony of the
^{necessary because his second name was John,}
renunciation of his ^{self}, making him
walk through the flames of ether, consecrated
by a leaf from the ivy crown of Cerys.

made him join in libations of wine, ^{and}

Then, as with their custom, the priestess ^{and} put him to the appalling test of apostasy. The ceremony had been successful; Regulus was pagan.

Three days later the rite of his initiation was to take place; a new rite, devised by Claude in arduous nights. Fifteen men and women of the inner circle had been invited to ~~the~~ attend; for his rite could not be openly proclaimed. Its existence must be guarded with every precaution that the infernal ingenuity of the celebrants could devise.

First, in solemn silence, the priestess of Cybele ~~there~~ came forth from the shrine -

49. / ⁿ

She was heavily veiled from head to foot, and a lion-skin hung from her slim shoulders.

|| Taking a drum and a cymbal from ~~the~~ two attendants, she gave him to eat ~~from~~ the one and to drink from the other. Then she took his head between her hands and cried:

"Inscribe thee to the service of the Mother of the Gods," at that she dropped her veils, and raised her brother from his knees. Her part was over; Claude had not told her what was to follow, except in vague terms, that the boy was to be initiated into the sacred dance, and led before the altar. Now the music began; they all had drum or flute or

50. / horn or cymbal, and one calling to another
in this mad music, they surrounded the novice
and began to dance. At first he stood
bewildered; then the madness found his
feet, and he began to leap and cry like
a wild thing. Presently Hughes, who had
slipped out of the doorway when the dance began
- his blindness forbade him to join in that
part of the ceremonies - opened the shrine.
With wolfish glee the intoxicated company
rushed into the sacred place, crying loud
like wild-beasts. On the altar lay a
heap of small sharp knives. The
infuriated worshippers scrambled for

there, gashing themselves and each other in their
 frenzy. The lovy saw red. He too picked
 up a knife. Claude motioned back the
 other worshippers; Repulus was left
 alone before the altar, facing Coly, who
 was reaching her knotted hands to heaven
 in a stammered and passionate ecstasy, as
 though she would drag down the goddess
 herself from heaven. Claude began
 a fierce incantation in ^{Greek} ~~Latin~~; his
 strong voice rolled above the rage of
 the barbaric music. Every now
 and then came choruses:

Σοὶ δ' ἔγω λείκας ἐπὶ βωμῶν ἀίγος

"I will bring a ^{white} ~~white~~ offering of a white goat before thee
 As the words became familiar by the constant
 repetition, men and women caught them up.

Regulus, his face flashing, his limbs aching
 and sweating with the dance, whose stigma

he did not feel in his excitement, howled

at the chorus, heedless of pain, gasping his

breast ^{and arms} now and again with the red-venning

knife. His eyes were fixed in awe and

wonder on the stone of Cybele, down to it

as a bird to a snake, seeming to

communicate ^{occultly} with it, soul to

soul. Suddenly his eyes illuminated, they

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as a bird to a snake, seeming to

communicate ^{occultly} with it, soul to

soul. Suddenly his eyes illuminated, they

grew wilder and wilder and more desperately
 fixed; his mouth opened in the square
 of tragedy, and a long hoarse scream
 inarticulate burst from his throat. He
~~stuttered~~ became still, rigid, on his face he
 gazed at the stone of Cybele, his eyes riveted,
 seeing some appalling sight, the scream one
 harsh and wild monotone. ~~With a cry~~
 at least with a gesture Claude brushed
 the symbols. Even Coxy heard; she dropped
 her arms, and gazed upon the altar
 and her brother, bewildered, ~~and~~
 sensing some Chinese. The boy's

54.

mouth closed, his head drooped; it was as if
some fearful struggle ended in submission.

He said in a very slow even voice, deliberately
and religiously:

Εὐὶ ὀΐγω λαβὼν ἐπὶ βῶπον ἄγος

Instantly his enthusiasm returned; the drums
and cymbals clashed and boomed; the horns

blowed out, the flutes shrieked passionately;

with one ^{shout of triumph} ~~voice~~ the cry leapt high into

the air; when he touched earth again

he had ^{consummated} ~~made~~ the ineffable ^{sacrifice} ~~act~~

that made him priest, and flung the

glorious trophies upon the sacred stone.

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glorious trophies upon the sacred stone.

~~There was~~ The deafening music of the dance
 redoubled in delirium; only Coly's saw
 herself for a moment, the Countess
 heiress, the delicately-bred English lady;
 and here she stood; the Roman blood in
 her had brought her to this pass. She
 stood, a Pagan Priestess, witness of the most
 tragic and loathsome rite of all
 antiquity. and the victim was her
 own brother, that lay there bleeding on
 the ground, his white face turned to
 heaven, with his eyes rolled up
 so that nothing showed but bloodshot

praeternaturalis

whites.

She staggered and fell; ~~her forehead~~ her arms automatically grasped the altar; her forehead sank upon the sacred stone, wet with her brother's blood. When she came to herself, the dance was over. The reaction had set in. Every one was ^{breathlessly} breathlessly quiet and self-possessed, pallid as death, the very breath sub-consciously suppressed. Claude was bidding them farewell. "I - Howard and I will look after the Priest of Bybele -", he said. In a month he shall first minister in public to the Mother of the Gods.

57.

Coly's wife to her full height. "O breast of
Dionysus, hearken! and cure him!" Claude,
who was bending over Regulus, helping
the doctor ^{to} place the bandages, came to her.
She put an arm about his neck. "I take
this man to be my husband," said she
sweetly and firmly "and I here offer to
the goddess our first born son to be
the priest of Cybele, that the rite be
established in the Flaccii, the
guardians of the sacred stone, from
generation unto generation, until the

Fates weary of spinning on the Loom of Time,
 and drop the silk from nerveless hands into
 the Abyss that lies beyond the stars. *Korax*
Om Pax. With these words, that for
 uncounted centuries had closed the
 greater mysteries, she ceased.

A few weeks later she was married
 to Claude at the Madeleine by the
 apostate Cardinal, who by subtle ~~and~~
 modulations of gesture and of emphasis & intonation,
 unperceptible save to the initiated, had
 restored the ceremony to a thin veil
 of the old rite at which ^{girls} ~~men~~ sang:

Ἰφολὸς δὴ τὸν ἰδὼσάντων

Ἰμὴν δὸν

59. ↗

ἄρεστε τέκοντες ἄνδρες

Ἰκμύδαον

Ἰάμβρος ἔρχεται ἰσοῦ, Ἄρεσσι

Ἰκμύδαον

ἄνδρος μέγαλον πόλιν μέγιστον

Ἰκμύδαον

Thus was ~~restored~~ restored the glory of the
house of Flaccus, and the secret worship
of the ancient goddess ~~reestablished~~ reestablished in
the world ~~again~~; and thus was

Their first born was a boy; they
called him Attis.