

A Masque of Choice

The Man — So ever comes the query—which?

The Machine—I am the thing your brain hath wrought, and stand
By toil of yours, to lighten common toil.

The Maiden—What care you for this thing of whirling wheels,—
You, that have in your breast a heart, and blood
To quicken at a touch, and lips to smile?

The Machine—Long was your thought on me, and with prepense
You set my destiny; your cunning hand
Foredoomed my lines and trusted me with fire;
You gave me force to follow your intent,
And bade me silently to cry your fame.

The Maiden—The spring is come,—the day of sun and song;
The wood of dreams is o'er us; let us walk
Unthinking and in joy before the gods—
Yet silent, lest we stir the wrath of Pan.
Can you not hear the dalliance of the birds,
Nor feel the kisses of the bashful breeze?
Breathe deep and listen; all the world's in love.

The Machine—Back, trifling master! traitor to the law,
Waste not the running moments of your power.
Return and serve the stalwart god of Things
Go bless the toiling thousands, and to lift
One burden from the shoulders of the world.

The Man — Whither, my soul?

The Maiden—The sun is glad of the green forests. Come.

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