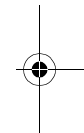
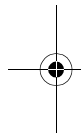




{THE VISION OF SUDDEN DEATH}
MS VSD D

The manuscript is held in the Berg Collection, New York Public Library, and is catalogued as 'The English mail coach: Dream-fugue'. It is one page, measuring 285 by 185 mm, with writing in black ink on both recto and verso. The recto, however, is actually two separate pieces of paper: a shorter sheet has been aligned at the top and sides, and then pasted down over a longer sheet. The paste down is the opening passage of the manuscript, running from 'Thus as we ran like torrents' to 'in a moment'. It has not been possible to read or retrieve the writing underneath the paste down. The bottom sheet becomes visible at 'of {↑ massiest} purple granite'. The paste down is gray wove; the bottom sheet is a yellowing laid paper with part of a watermark visible.

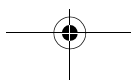
Japp is more than likely responsible for the pasting together of the two manuscript sheets. This would be in line with his habitually unwarranted editorial interventions. He reprints an inaccurately edited version of the manuscript as 'The Ransom for Waterloo' (Japp, *PW*, vol.1 pp. 323–5). For details of the 'Conventions for Manuscript Transcription', see above, p. xvii. For the occasion and context of 'The Vision of Sudden Death', see headnote, pp. 401–8.



{1 r.}

Thus as we ran like torrents, thus as with bridal rapture our flying equipage swept over the *Campo santo* of the graves, – thus as our burning wheels carried warrior instincts, kindled earthly passions, amongst the trembling dust below us – <dust of our noble fathers that had slept in God since Créci,> suddenly we became aware of a vast Necropolis from afar {↑ to which we were hurrying}. In a moment <from afar we were <a> bending> our maddening wheels were nearing it <in a moment we were running through its gates > <in a moment>

of {↑ massiest} purple granite {↑ in massiest piles} was this city of the dead, and yet {↑ <at again>} <for the> {↑ <in the> for one} <first> moment it lay like a {↑ visionary} purple stain on the horizon, so mighty was the distance. <Through> {↑ In} the second moment {↑ this purple city} <it> trembled through many changes, {↑ and grew <by> by fiery <coruscations> puli<as>ations, so mighty was the pace. In the third moment {↑ already} with



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our dreadful gallop <already> we were entering, <The> {↑ its} suburbs <of this ancient>. <V Towers and> Systems of sarcophagi, <becrested with> {↑ having rose with <pl> crests,} aerial <turrets rising high into> {↑ of terraces and turrets <rose> <to> into the upper glooms, –} strode forward with haughty encroachment upon the central <ais> aisle, – ran back with mighty shadows into answering recesses. <Where the towers of> <As> {↑ Like} rivers in {↑ <the pomp of> horned} floods <that> wheeling {↑ in <soundless> pomps} round headlands {↑ of unfathom-<edless>{↑ ed} <of> waters} <as> {↑ like} hurricanes that ride into the secrets of forests, faster than ever light <unravell'd the images> {↑ <linked>} {↑ travels through the wilderness} of darkness, <and our horses sweep shoot every angle and angle> we shot the angles – we <curved> {↑ fled} round the <fluent> curves of the <labyrinths before us> {↑ labyrinthine <sarcophagi> infinite city.} <Where the <so> streets wheeled, there did our horses wheel. Up or down, by secret or by open wards, where the streets curved> – {↑ with the storms of our horses' feet,} <there did our horses curve – there did> {↑ and <with the chasm> of our} our burning wheels {↑ did we} carry earthly passions, kindle warrior instincts, amongst the {↑ silent} dust <below> {↑ around} us <and around> us – dust of our noble fathers that had slept in God since Créci. Every sarcophagus shewed many basreliefs; basreliefs of battles, basreliefs of battle-fields; <of> battles from forgotten ages, <of> battles from yesterday; <of> battle-fields that long since nature had healed and reconciled to herself with the sweet oblivion of flowers; <of> battle-fields, that were yet angry and crimson with carnage in all <And now had we reached the last sarcophagus,> And now had we reached the last sarcophagus already we were abreast

[1 v.]

of the last basrelief, already we were recovering the arrow-like flight of the <endless> central aisle, when coming up it in counterview to ourselves we beheld the frailest of cars – built as it might seem from floral wreaths, and <xx> and {↑ from} the shells of Indian Seas. <Silvery mists that went before it> half concealed {↑ hidden were} the fawns that drew it – by the {↑ floating} mists that {↑ floated} went before it in pomp. But the mists hid not the lovely countenance of the <in> infant girl that sate {↑ with a} upon the car, and hid not the birds of tropic plumage with which she played – Face to face she <came moved> rode {↑ forward} to meet us, And baby laughter <was> in her {↑ <confiding>} eyes {↑ at the ruin that approached} saluted {↑ under misgiving} <our laureled equipage, as for a moment we contemplated the ruin that was at hand.> {↑ the gorgeous cathedral} Oh baby, I <exclaimed> said in anguish, must we, that carry tidings of great joy to every people, be {↑ God's} messengers of ruin to thee. In horror I rose at the thought. But then also, in horror at the thought, rose one that was sculptured in the basrelief, – a dying trumpeter. Solemnly <to> from the field of Waterloo he rose to



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his feet; and, unslinging his stony trumpet, carried it in his dying anguish to his stony lips — sounding once, and yet once again: proclamation, that to *thy* ears, oh baby, must have spoken from the battlements of death. Immediately deep shadows fell between us, and <mighty> {↑ mightiest} shuddering silence. The choir had ceased to sing: the uproar of our laureled equipage alarmed the graves no more. By horror the basrelief had been unlocked into life – By horror we that were so full of life – we men, and our horses with their fiery forelegs rising in mid air to their everlasting gallop were petrified to a basrelief. Oh glacial pagentry of death, that through {↑ from end to end} of the gorgeous cathedral {↑ for a moment} froze every eye <to> by contagion of <fr> panic! Then for the third time the trumpet sounded. Back with the shattering burst came the infinite rushing of life <once more>. The seals of frost were raised from our stiffening hearts <the roar of our thunders of>

