

# TAORMINA

CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

A little tumbled city on the height,  
    Basking above the cactus and the sea!  
What pale, frail ghosts of memory come to-night  
    And call back the forgotten years to me!  
    *Taormina, Taormina,*  
    *And the month of the almond blossom.*

In an old book I find a withered flower  
    And withered dreams awake to their old fire.  
How far have danced your feet since that fair hour  
    That brought us to the land of heart's desire!  
    *Taormina, Taormina,*  
    *Oh, the scent of the almond blossom.*

The grey-white monastery-garden wall  
    O'erpeers the white crag, and the flung vines upclamber  
In the white sun, and cling, and seem to fall,—  
    Brave bougainvillias, purple and smoky amber.  
    *Taormina, Taormina,*  
    *And the month of the almond blossom.*

You caught your breath, as hand in hand we stood  
    To watch the luminous peak of Aetna there  
Soaring above the cloudy solitude,  
    Enmeshed in the opaline Sicilian air.  
    *Taormina, Taormina,*  
    *Oh, the scent of the almond blossom.*

We babbled of Battos and brown Corydon,—  
    Of Amaryllis coiling her dark locks,—  
Of the sad-hearted satyr grieving on  
    The tomb of Helice among the rocks  
    O'erhung with the almond blossom,—

Of how the goat-boy wrenched apart the vines  
That veiled the slim-limbed Chloe at her bath,  
And followed her fleet-foot flight among the pines  
And caught her close, and kissed away her wrath.  
*Taormina, Taormina,*  
*And the month of the almond blossom.*

And then—you turned impetuously to me!  
We saw the blue hyacinths at our feet; and came  
To the battlements, and looked down upon the sea—  
And the sea was a blue flame!

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The blue flame dies. The ghosts come back to me.  
*Taormina, Taormina,*  
*Oh, the scent of the almond blossom.*