

ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH



POETRY

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Poetry

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"Trust in good verses then:
They only shall aspire,
When pyramids, as men
Are lost i'the funeral fire."



As the tale is told by Plato, in the tenth book of his *Republic*, one Er the son of Arminius, a Pamphylian, was slain in battle; and ten days afterwards, when they collected the bodies for burial, his body alone showed no taint of corruption. His relatives, however, bore it off to the funeral pile; and on the twelfth day, lying there, he returned to life and told them what he had seen in the other world. Many wonders he related concerning the dead, for example, with their rewards and punishments: but most wonderful of all was the great Spindle of Necessity which he saw reaching up into heaven with the planets revolving around it in whorls of graduated width and speed, yet all concentric and so timed that all complete the full circle punctually together. —"The Spindle turns on the knees of Necessity: and on the rim of each whorl sits perched a Siren, who goes round with it, hymning a single note; the eight notes together forming one harmony."