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JESSIE MARION KING (1875-1949)

(New Kilpatrick 1875–1949 Kirkcudbright)

*'No Goblin or Swart Faëry Hath Hurtfull Power'*  
– illustration to John Milton's 'Comus'

Signed and inscribed with title

Pen and black ink on vellum

72 × 54 inches (19.4 × 13.7 cm)



## LITERATURE

J. Milton, *Comus. A Masque.*, London, 1906, illustrated opposite p. 36.

*The image she conjures up ... [are] not quite like anything else in Art, and once entered, never wholly escaped from.*  
John Russell Taylor

Described by the art critic John Russell Taylor as 'one of the most original and accomplished of all the art nouveau book artists in Britain', Jessie M King assimilated the influences of Burne-Jones, Beardsley and Charles Rennie Mackintosh and developed a body of work that is individual and instantly recognisable. She and her artist-designer husband E.A. Taylor had long and peripatetic careers starting in their native Glasgow where both were important contributors to the circle around Charles Rennie Mackintosh developing what subsequently became known as *The Glasgow Style*. In the early 1900s they lived for several years in Paris where they founded a successful art

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school called 'The Sheiling Atelier' until the First World War forced them back to Scotland. However, they found time to indulge in cafe society amongst the set that included Matisse, Utrillo, Marie Laurencin and fellow Scots Peplow and J.D. Fergusson. Back in Scotland they split their time between the Isle of Arran and the artist's community in Kirkcudbright for the rest of their lives.

Jessie King provided the illustrations to over 100 books for leading publishers such as Bodley Head and the Edinburgh house TN Foulis. The present work, produced in 1906 for George Routledge's edition of John Milton's masque *Comus*, lies opposite the lines,

*Elder Brother: My sister...*

*... she has a hidden strength,*

[...]

*Which ...*

*'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity:*

*She that has that is clad in complete steel*

An exceptionally fine example of King's work, it benefits from close inspection to admire her distinctive use of Indian ink in thin pen lines and dots on vellum.