

**POEMS OF
THE ORIENT**

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Poems of the Orient by Bayard Taylor

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BAYARD TAYLOR

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BY
BAYARD TAYLOR.

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PROEM DEDICATORY.

AN EPISTLE FROM MOUNT TMOLUS.

TO RICHARD HENRY STODDARD.

1.

O FRIEND, were you but couched on Tmolus' side,
In the warm myrtles, in the golden air
Of the declining day, which half lays bare,
Half drapes, the silent mountains and the wide
Embosomed vale, that wanders to the sea ;
And the far sea, with doubtful specks of sail,
And farthest isles, that slumber tranquilly
Beneath the Ionian autumn's violet veil ;—

(7)

Were you but with me, little were the need
 Of this imperfect artifice of rhyme,
 Where the strong Fancy peals a broken chime
 And the ripe brain but sheds abortive seed.
 But I am solitary, and the curse,
 Or blessing, which has clung to me from birth —
 The torment and the ecstasy of verse —
 Comes up to me from the illustrious earth
 Of ancient Tmolus; and the very stones,
 Reverberant, din the mellow air with tones
 Which the sweet air remembers; and they blend
 With fainter echoes, which the mountains fling
 From far oracular caverns: so, my Friend,
 I cannot choose but sing!

II.

Unto mine eye, less plain the shepherds be,
 Tending their browsing goats amid the broom,
 Or the slow camels, travelling towards the sea,
 Laden with bales from Baghdad's gaudy loom,
 Or yon nomadic Turcomans, that go
 Down from their summer pastures — than the twain
 Immortals, who on 'Tmolus' thymy top
 Sang, emulous, the rival strain!
 Down the charmed air did light Apollo drop;

Great Pan ascended from the vales below.
 I see them sitting in the silent glow ;
 I hear the alternating measures flow
 From pipe and golden lyre ;— the melody
 Heard by the Gods between their nectar bowls,
 Or when, from out the chambers of the sea,
 Comes the triumphant Morning, and unrolls
 A pathway for the sun ; then, following swift,
 The dædal harmonies of awful caves
 Cleft in the hills, and forests that uplift
 Their sea-like boom, in answer to the waves,
 With many a lighter strain, that dances o'er
 The wedded reeds, till Echo strives in vain
 To follow :

 Hark ! once more,
 How floats the God's exultant strain
 In answer to Apollo !

*“ The wind in the reeds and the rushes,
 The bees on the bells of thyme,
 The birds on the myrtle bushes,
 The cicade above in the lime,
 And the lizards below in the grass
 Are as silent as ever old Tmolus was,
 Listening to my sweet pipings.”*