

**CHILD SLAVES &
OTHER
POEMS, PP. 1-144**

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Child Slaves & Other Poems, pp. 1-144 by Sol. L. Long

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*Child Slaves & Other
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By Sol. L. Long



L. C.

1909
THE COURIER PRESS
WINFIELD, KANSAS

14.5m!

Preface

I make no apology for this volume. I am not mendacious enough to offer the conventional apology. The verses are not perfect. Neither is their author, nor is any one who shall read them. They will be criticised, both as to form and substance; but not by the one who has sailed my sea, and criticism by one who has not sailed my sea is hearsay and immaterial.

It is well and commendable to strive toward perfection, but wherein is the sense, rhyme, or reason, in apologizing for not reaching it; when one knows, and the world knows, to a dead moral certainty, that perfection cannot be reached. All apologies for any sort of mental effort are either unconscious, or premeditated, peans of egotism.

Men have attempted to define poetry. It cannot be defined; and this, because it is an attempt to interpret life and life is eternal and being so is indefinable; not to be comprehended, much less reduced to rule. Life can only be guessed at in part and poems, prose or verse, are only the writer's fleeting and imperfect glimpses of that elusive, eternal thing of which all things here are shadows on a screen, mere echoes of things real. Poets are only voyagers who have sailed life's present seas and noted their rocks, reefs, dangerous coasts and safe harbors, and poems are the log-book of the voyage.

Whether or not any poem be of any sort of value to you; whether or not it appeals to you at all, depends upon whether or not you have sailed, are sailing, or about to sail, one of the seven seas of life voyaged by the one by whom the poem was produced. If you have not sailed the sea from whence the chart was drawn it will appear worthless—you will not understand it. If you are sailing such sea, it will be of value before the end of the voyage.

Never was a measure written, from the obituary in the country weekly, to the most sublime epic; from the fan-

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tastic things the youth conjures up and writes for the eyes of her who inspired them, to the measure that seems to lift the veil of the Eternal world, but what possessed some of the divine harmony which holds the spheres in place. Imperfect? All to a degree. Deformed? Much. Worthless? None. Nothing was ever penned but that somewhere, someplace, was some one to whom it would appeal—some one who was hungry for that sort of food. The mere searcher after mechanical perfection will overlook this, but the one who has gazed long into the unfathomable depths of the human soul will know it to be true—know it as he does his mother's language.

Save in very few instances the productions herein are just as they were first penned. It is my experience that the working over of verses, after the time when they had to be written has passed, results in mechanical perfection and spiritual deformity.

I have, as near as practicable, followed the order of production in the arrangement of the verses in the book, and this for two reasons: One, to enable the solemn searcher after small things to obtain a text from which to moralize on the development, or degeneracy, of the bard—provided, always, that he, or she, conclude there was a bard—and for a second, stronger and main reason: because I so desire to place them.

Whatever others may say, I know that these are echoes—but echoes only. No chord is herein touched but what the writer has heard, in the surrounding vastness, louder, more triumphant, more despairing, more tender, more hopeful, more entrancing strains, and not only heard them but saw the hand that swept the harpstrings.

Holding these views, any apology for the verses would be an insult to the reader and a stultification of myself, and I am not conventional enough to do either. If I am to lie of record I shall make it an original and not to the hackneyed and conventional departure from truth.

Dedication

There are those who labor to strike the shackles from the limbs of men; making them free physically.

There are those who labor to remove the fetters from the minds of men; making them free mentally.

There are those who labor to banish trammels from the souls of men; making them free spiritually.

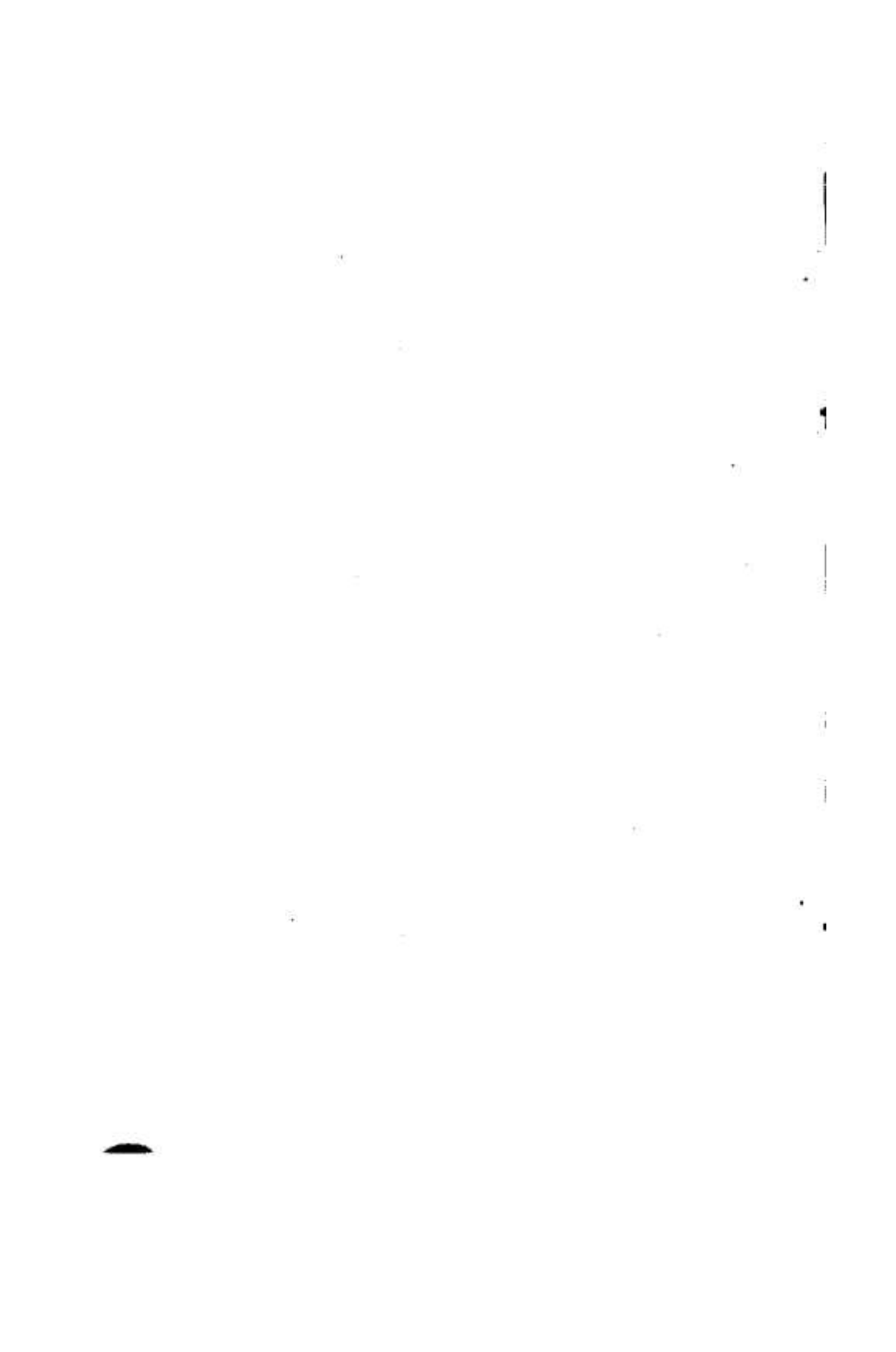
These three classes are God's great, and only, visible trinity.

To one of this trinity, who speaks the language of the "Old Frontier;" who has given his life and the strength of his manhood to the cause of human freedom; who has fought, and fought nobly from the cow-camp to, in and through, the legislative halls of his adopted State, for his fellows and a broader manhood, here and now—in this present world; who has been my friend from early manhood; has had faith in me and my work and has stood by me during the darkness and now holds my hand at the dawn; to

HON. LOT RAVENSCROFT,

of Ashland, Clark County, Kansas this volume is dedicated by

The Author.



The Child Slaves

God of life! I see the children,
Maimed of brow and sunk of chest.
They are toiling in the east-land;
They are toiling in the west.
Lifting to thy sky wan faces,
Numbly longing to be free!
Standing, helpless, in thy presence,
As memorials to thee.

God of life! I see the children;
Drooping like the plant which dies!
I can see no gleam of promise
In their sad and vacant eyes.
Eyes from which is gone the lustre;
Gone the hall mark of the soul
For which lack some one must answer
When Thine angel calls the roll.

God of life! I see the children;
Shrunk of limb and tendon cramped,
Pace a sentry's beat, through darkness,
Where the hosts of Greed are camped!
Talon handed; primal visaged;
Signs of that dread curse which waits
Till our coveteousness, gold drunken,
Draw it, cased, within our gates.

God of life! I see the children
Murdered in the paths of peace;
Crowded to the grave by legions,
That earth's tinsel may increase!