

**THE HERMITAGE  
AND LATER POEMS**

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The Hermitage and Later Poems by Edward Rowland Sill

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**EDWARD ROWLAND SILL**

**THE HERMITAGE  
AND LATER POEMS**





*S. R. Sill*

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THE LETTER.

EDWARD ROWLAND SILL, DIED FEBRUARY

27, 1887.

*I held his letter in my hand,  
And even while I read  
The lightning flashed across the land  
The word that he said: dead.*

*How strange it seemed! - His living voice  
Was speaking from the page  
Those courteous phrases, tersely choiced,  
Light-hearted, witty, sage.*

*I wondered what it was that died!  
The man himself was here,  
His modesty, his scholar's pride,  
His soul serene and clear.*

*These neither death nor time shall dim,  
Still this sad thing must be —  
Henceforth I may not speak to him,  
Though he can speak to me!*

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

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## THE HERMITAGE.<sup>1</sup>

### I.



LIFE, — a common, cleanly,  
quiet life,  
Full of good citizenship and re-  
pute,  
New, but with promise of prosperity, —  
A well-bred, fair, young-gentlemanly  
life, —  
What business had a girl to bring her  
eyes,  
And her blonde hair, and her clear, ring-  
ing voice,  
And break up life, as a bell breaks a  
dream?  
Had Love Christ's wrath, and did this  
life sell doves

<sup>1</sup> California, Bay of San Francisco, 1866.



In the world's temple, that Love scourged  
it forth

Beyond the gates? Within, the worship-  
ers, —

Without, the waste, and the hill-country,  
where

The life, with smarting shoulders and  
stung heart,

Unknowing that the hand which scourged  
could heal,

Drove forth, blind, cursing, in despair to  
die,

Or work its own salvation out in fear.

---

Old World — old, foolish, wicked World  
— farewell!

Since the Time-angel left my soul with  
thee,

Thou hast been a hard step-mother unto  
me.

Now I at last rebel

Against thy stony eyes and cruel hands.

I will go seek in far-off lands  
Some quiet corner, where my years shall  
    be  
Still as the shadow of a brooding bird  
That stirs but with her heart-beats. Far,  
    unheard  
May wrangle on the noisy human host,  
While I will face my Life, that silent  
    ghost,  
And force it speak what it would have  
    with me.

Not of the fair young Earth,  
The snow-crowned, sunny-belted globe ;  
Not of its skies, nor Twilight's purple  
    robe,  
Nor pearly dawn ; not of the flowers'  
    birth,  
And Autumn's forest-funerals ; not of  
    storms,  
And quiet seas, and clouds' incessant  
    forms ;  
Not of the sanctuary of the night,

With its solemnities, nor any sight  
And pleasant sound of all the friendly  
day :

But I am tired of what we call our lives ;  
Tired of the endless humming in the  
hives, —

Sick of the bitter honey that we eat,  
And sick of cursing all the shallow  
cheat.

Let me arise, and away  
To the land that guards the dying day,  
Whose burning tear, the evening-star,  
Drops silently to the wave afar ;  
The land where summers never cease  
Their sunny psalm of light and peace.  
Whose moonlight, poured for years un-  
told ;  
Has drifted down in dust of gold ;  
Whose morning splendors, fallen in show-  
ers,  
Leave ceaseless sunrise in the flowers.