

A BOOK OF VERSES

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A book of verses by George Sterling

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GEORGE STERLING

**A BOOK
OF VERSES**

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

The sea is a molten pearl,
And pearl the fleckless sky;
The firstling leaves unfurl,
And the air is a fragrant sigh.

A bird's soft madrigal
In the peartree's blossoming;
High on the church-spire tall
A white dove preens her wing.

The elemental strife
Lost in a peace profound,
In sound of quickening life
That yet is scarcely sound.

One with the starry chime
Earth keeps her rhythmic beat--
Our mother, old as time,
With heart still young and sweet.

Ina Coolbrith.

The Moth of Time

Lo! this audacious vision of the dust—
This dream that it hath dreamt! Unresting wings,
Too strong for Time, too frail for timeless things!
Whence all thy thirst for God, thy piteous lust
For life to be when matter's chain shall rust?
What pact hast thou with the undying kings,
Silence and Death? What sibyl's counsellings
Assure thee that the eternal laws are just?

Nay! all thy hopes are nothing to the Night,
And justice but a figment of thy dream!
Upon the waste what wide mirages glow,
With hills that shift, and palms that mock the sight,
And cities on the desert's far extreme—
Those veils we name, and dare to think we know!

George Sterling.

Compensation

For every pang a thrill of joy,
For every sin a deed of grace,
For every curse a benison,
Somewhere, somehow, sometime.

This is my faith, that God is just,
That wrong shall be resolved in right,
That out of darkness breaks the light.

We would not have eternal day,
We would not have all happiness;
The shadows make the glow more bright,
The night-gloom glorifies the day,
And sorrow sanctifies our bliss.

So if this life seem mostly lost
In the dull reach of dreary gloom,
And if the good be bowed in dust,
What matters it, if God be just?

The great world-plan cannot be wrong,
In other lives, on other spheres
The good God justifies earth-tears,
And souls that suffer shall be blessed.

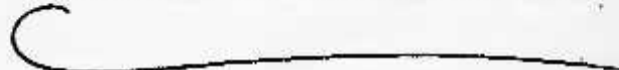
Charles Keeler

Truth's Dawn

Had truth not dawned—
There had been in my heart no little shrine
On which the flame of joy burns ceaselessly.
I had not known the way, pure and benign,
Nor soft-lipped peace, nor even hope were mine,
Had truth not dawned!

Had truth not dawned—
I had not understood that Love will keep
The spirit unconfined, the footsteps free
That tread the king's highway; nor known the sweep
Of life unending, changeless, love-crowned, deep,
Had truth not dawned!

Florence Ardiman Miller



Charity

Thou art no slave nor diplomatic Sage,
Dissembling in no high nor servile guise.
The common lot of all is thy emprise,
The common weal of all thy tutelage.
No war of favors doth thy white hands wage.
The poorest waif or clod beneath the skies
Finds knightly favor in thy gentle eyes.
Thy soft caress a boon for youth and age.
Thou fair handmaid of God, supernal fount
Of love; thy tears like fadeless asphodels,
Bestrew earth's rugged path with fragrant grace.
Our solaced hearts forgetting oft to count
The many painful scars life's record tells—
Beguiled to patient trust by thy sweet face.

Mary Lamb

How Shall It Be?

How shall it be, when—some supernal morning,
Longed for, and given of God's abiding grace—
Borne by a breath, and with no note of warning,
On unknown paths, we two meet face to face.

So long it seems since you went sailing, sailing
Far on a sea that, yet, I may not cross;
So long, since pitying breeze brought back your hailing:
"Life is but love, and love is never loss."

And yet when dusks on all the hills are lying,
And ships creep homeward through the Golden Gate,
I call to you and hear your low replying:
"Sing and be glad, and still in patience wait."

Dwight Dickinson

Retrospection

Ah, give me back my chain of childhood days
That now like scattered opals at my feet
Do lie; their lights at variance with the sweet
Of memories, and in the gathering haze
Of twilight thoughts, when hushed silence lays
A finger on my heart, it bids it beat
To melodies that urge my soul to meet
Those dear dream-voices of my happier ways.

To hold one hour that in remembrance lies
So that on slender, golden threads of years
I could string fancies of the long ago:
The time when fairies painted sunset skies
And I saw lights of rainbows through my tears,
For this—I'd give my all to have and know.

Alfred Hunt Whitaker