

**THE BOOK OF THE  
DEAD, PP. 1-209**

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The Book of the Dead, pp. 1-209 by George H. Boker

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# THE BOOK OF THE DEAD.

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BY  
*Ermy*  
GEORGE H. BOKER.

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PHILADELPHIA:  
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LONDON: 16 SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND.  
1882.

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BESTON the spreading Nile of old,  
They buried with their worthy dead  
A scrolled papyrus, to unfold  
His virtues and the life he led.

And all the gods, in council grave,  
Asked nothing but this written scroll,  
As evidence, to doom or save  
The bearer's arbitrated soul.

Grand thought! enlarging on the view;  
This winnowed record of the pen  
Made truth a right, and upward drew  
The moral sympathies of men.

Man leaned on man for judgment just,  
The grave became truth's inner shrine,  
And every heap of mortal dust  
Was revered as a thing divine.

So I within thy hallowed tomb  
Enclose this book, most loved of men!  
There, till the dreadful day of doom,  
May it repose, but open then!

Book of the Dead, if any see  
False judgments in thy earnest page,  
Be all thy gathered sins on me,—  
Man's vengeance and God's juster rage!



I.

'Tis not my purpose to explain  
The truths here dimly set in view;  
These hieroglyphics of the brain  
Are meant for others to undo.

I hang my painted pictures high,  
I paint them ill, or paint them well;  
If they say nothing to the eye,  
Then I have nothing more to tell.

Thus much, howe'er, to all be known:  
The man, of men most loved by me,  
Raised up a ruin till it shone  
Before men's eyes a prodigy.

And all men praised the wondrous spot,  
And marvelled daily more and more;  
The only fault was he forgot  
To drive the vermin from the door.

The knaves who found safe shelter there,  
Who owed him more than they could pay,  
Were eaten up with envious care  
Because their chief was more than they.

But, cowards shrewd, they hid their thought,  
And fetched and carried at his nod,  
Until his soul was upward caught  
By the dread, sudden hand of God.

In life they played their cunning parts,  
They lauded everything he did;  
In death they—bold, heroic hearts—  
Stabbed at him through the coffin-lid!

They searched his mansion through and through,  
With wolfish hate in every glance;  
Of all they saw they nothing knew,  
And charged him with their ignorance.

Here was some work left incomplete,  
There something showed the touch of time;  
They could not fill his empty seat,—  
They made his very death a crime.

Then slander followed, hints of guilt,  
The murmur grew a general roar;  
And, in the very house he built,  
They drove his children from the door.

Now partly in my scorn of wrong,  
But chiefly for the wronged one's love,  
I lift my voice, and through my song  
I hear an answer from above.

If you who judge, charge any leaf  
With thoughts too wild or words too plain,  
Then say, the man is mad with grief;  
These villains struck through heart and brain.