

ARIEL

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Ariel by José Enrique Rodó & F. J. Stimson

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JOSÉ ENRIQUE RODÓ & F. J. STIMSON

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BY

JOSÉ ENRIQUE RODÓ

TRANSLATED, WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

BY

F. J. STIMSON (J. S. OF DALE)

Late United States Ambassador to Argentina



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JOSÉ ENRIQUE RODÓ

Prefatory Essay

ONE day last year, some three years after his death at Palermo alone and in distress, a Uruguayan ship of war brought home, to his native city of Montevideo, Rodo's body—to be buried beneath the great monument his nation is now to dedicate to him. The day was made a national holiday, and all Latin America, in sympathy, took part.

Although perhaps the greatest of modern American idealists, and the London Times, the Boston Transcript, the New York Prensa, devoted pages to his memory, he is still little known in North America. "ARIEL," perhaps his greatest work, has much to say of us; it is charged with a spirit that in these post-war days we have largely lost; it brings the best thought of that older, Latin, Roman culture of Amer-

ica of the South to the newer, Saxon civilization of the North; it has been therefore a grateful task for a representative of the latter to essay its translation, with a hope of saving something of the beauty of the original. For "ARIEL" is a thing of *beauty*, first of all; its learning, if not its teaching, might be gleaned from other books.

South America believes, with many of us, that in the ideals of America rest the hope of the world. And in this all-American mission, South America has its share. The Saxon gift to the world's civilization was liberty; the Roman, was law; the one excels in applied science, the other in the Art of Life; and both, in America, are dreaming of a world where there is no war. But South America, in an age of brute conflict, a time of chemistry and of machines, when the flood of materialism seemed about to overcome the finer work of civilization, has, by its very remoteness, its very backwardness, been held aloof.

Although with a passionate interest greater than ours, it viewed the war for the most part as a distant planet a burning sun. And before that cataclysm, to which the world's machine-made industrialism indeed had largely led, its countries, mainly agricultural, were spared that flood of energy for the multiplication of the cheaper things of life, not food for body or the soul, that slavery to machines in the much-vaunted "efficiency," and "division of labor," that exploitation of man and woman in the operative, which have so much confused our Northern judgment of the higher things in life, and, worse than that, has bred class-conflict, distrust of all government, and passionate enmity between those who should be working together in generous production and fair distribution of even the material things of earth.

John Stuart Mill had a horrible phrase : "*Utilities, fixed and embodied in material objects*"; and it has lately seemed, in that

world of chemistry and machinery which our modern life has evolved, as if only those utilities which could be fixed and embodied in material objects and multiplied in great quantities for universal demand were deemed of any value. Newspapers instead of books, "process" work for pictures, "movies" for plays, casts for sculpture, moulds of concrete for architecture, and, worst of all, canned food or cold-storage for fresh vegetables, meat, or fish, and ready-bought "delicatessen" replacing the art of cooking; commercial textbooks and state-schedules for the individual teacher; trusts for the private initiative; and everywhere, machinery for handicraft, "applied science" for the arts, and crowd-imitation or the mob-spirit for the free mind. But Ruskin followed Mill; and he asked humanity to consider what "value" really means. It is not material, still less mechanical, but the *life-giving* quality of a thing: *valor—valere*—that