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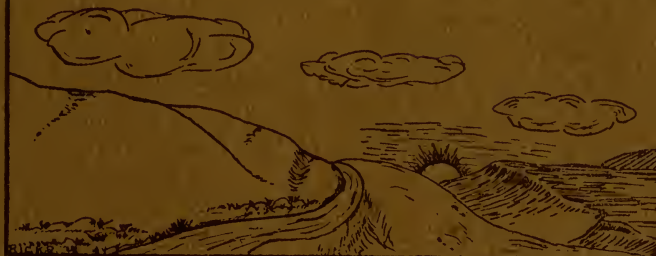


A BOOK OF VERSE

THE WHISTLE MAKER  
AND  
OTHER POEMS

BY

WILLIAM NAUNS RICKS



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## Introduction

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As I have written so much verse which has received favorable comment, and not a few of which have been published; and because my friends have so persistently urged me to "publish a book," with many misgivings I am sending out to the busy world a few of my thoughts and musings.

I make no pretense to an exalted literary style or perfection; I have selected a few poems which seem to contain some small measure of beauty.

If any one of them should give you pleasure for a moment, or the whole of them should while away a pleasant half hour for you; or should you find comfort or inspiration to see the road of life from a broader and more cheerful plane; or if I sing a simple song to reach the heart, to bring you closer to man or to God, I shall be well repaid.

WILLIAM NAUNS RICKS.

December, 1914.

## THE WHISTLE-MAKER

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Twedle-tweet-e-tweedle-tweet  
Comes the call across the years;  
Gently stealing clear and sweet,  
Bringing smiles or tears.  
Willows swaying in the wind,  
Mossy banks of stream below,  
Children, chicks and kindred kind  
Gather round to see the show.

Gray of hair but young of heart,  
Youth still singing in your soul,  
Master of an ancient art—  
Liquid notes around you roll.  
Orpheus playing to the beasts,  
Music-maker to the stones,  
Faunus at the Roman feasts;  
Syrinx-like are all your tones.

Breeze and birds join in your song,  
Feet of young things round you race,  
Pan still leads the way along  
As he did in Golden Thrace.  
Barks for whistles you know well,  
Learned them in Olympian woods  
E'er the Gods by mortals fell  
You were fashioning your goods.

“Whistles, for one baby's kiss;  
(With much haggling on the trade)  
Bargains now you must not miss  
Step up, do not be afraid!”  
You have cheated from the start,  
You have played an unfair game,  
Sold the whistle, stole the heart,  
Robbers always are the same.

Now each time when fancy roves  
From the busy halls of trade,  
We go seeking through the groves  
For the whistles you have made.  
Tweedle-tweet,-e-tweedle-twee,  
Sounds the call; but you are gone,  
Sounding clear in heart of me,  
So my footsteps follow on.

June 26, 1914.

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### TO A BIRD

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O, bird upon your swaying bough,  
Teach me your secret; tell me how  
You learned to find in life such joy?  
What are the arts which you employ?

Why do the notes swell in your throat?  
Why do you rest like some fair boat,  
Upon a calm unruffled sea?  
O singer, teach your song to me.

I find in life so many cares;  
O, tell me, where you buy your wares,  
Who sells the food you feast upon,  
Which gives you joy till life is done.

The secret of the Gods you hold,  
More precious far than finest gold.  
Your life is full, your song is free.  
O singer, teach your song to me.

Dec. 9, 1912.

## THE POPPY FIELDS BY LAKE CHABOT

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I wish you'd go to the poppy fields  
That bloom by the lake Chabót,  
Such wonderfully carpeted poppy fields,  
They look like a golden snow  
That has fallen upon the emerald earth,  
Then melted in spots, where the blue  
Of the cornflowers show like bits of sky,  
And the world has a marvelous hue.

The work-a-day world seemed brighter today  
For the charm of the poppies was there,  
And the dull gray stones of the city's way  
Seemed an easier path to fare.  
For I felt that around every corner  
Green vistas would burst into view,  
Tho I listened in vain for the caroling birds,  
The hum of the city seemed new.

April, 1913.

## THE EVENING STAR

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I saw the evening star  
At the very point in the sky  
Where the rose turned to blue;  
A few scattered clouds to the right and left  
And a great black mass of cloud below:  
Opal, shading into blue, filled the sky above,  
And the star, a great diamond of wondrous luster,  
Stood supreme. A symbol for jewelers  
To forever hold, as a perfect ideal.  
No other light was seen, it stood alone,  
And its brilliant beauty brought me thoughts of you.

I stood in the gloaming;  
The beauty sank into my soul;  
Filled me, calmed me, gave me joy.  
Standing thus entranced, years slipped away;  
And the old victor's song filled my heart.  
Then night came on, slowly, like music repeated  
In softer strain, before ceasing.  
So sank my star in that hour when you left me;  
Sank into the mist of eternity,  
But left its radiance and glory with me.

April 6, 1914.

THE COMING NIGHT  
(From the Berkeley Hills)

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The shining clouds hang pendant  
    Along the winding lea;  
The sun stands out resplendent  
    Above the tranquil sea.  
The western wind moves softly,  
    Waving the tender grass,  
The trees more staid and lofty  
    Scarce bend to let it pass.  
The cattle down the hillside,  
    Move slowly, homeward bent;  
Cooing doves and mates in pride  
    Breathe out their sweet content.  
Far beyond, the sea-gulls fly  
    With curving, measured sweep;  
Swallows playing, dot the sky;  
    The world prepares for sleep.  
I turn, the sun more splendid,  
    Bathes land and sea in gold;  
A thousand colors blended,  
    Toward the hills are rolled.  
There, amethyst and violet,  
    Where green and brown held sway  
With scarlet, form a triolet  
    To deck the dying day.  
Down sinks the sun—the monarch  
    Of all this glorious show;  
Clouds once brilliant, now are dark  
    And all is hushed below.  
Uplifted heart and outstretched hand  
    Bid farewell to the sight;  
I speed my steps to lower land  
    And bless the coming night.

Feb. 8, 1913.



## GETHSEMANE

1914

The chilling night winds shake the trees,  
Black night is all around,  
The Master-man on bended knees  
Sends forth a pleading sound.  
He prays alone, while bloodlike sweat  
From brow and heart wells up—  
“O, Father mine, forgive, forget!  
Let pass this bitter cup.”  
“Yet not My will, but Thine be done;  
Thou see'st and knowest all,  
Though mortal man, I'm still Thy son;  
—This cup is filled with gall.  
“Came I for this, to suffer pain  
Man's soul to save from loss,  
That I as sacrifice once slain,  
Should bear his future cross,  
But now the years before Me roll,  
The sons of man I see  
In murderous strife take dreadful toll,  
Forgetting Thou and Me!  
But, calling on Thy name withal.  
O, mockery! O, shame!  
While by their hands their brothers fall,  
Through murder-seeking fame.  
“O, Father, let this bitter cup  
Of man's redemption be  
Placed to My lips when lifted up  
Through Me let them be free.  
When starting from Thy throne I knew  
Great sorrow there must be,  
Ere man could gain the higher view  
Or be as one with Me.  
But cries of women come tonight—  
A mighty surging flood;  
They call to Me to give men light  
And still this sea of blood!”

All Wisdom, Father, comes from Thee,  
Thou fashioneth the cup,  
Thou knowest how each step shall be  
Ere man is lifted up;  
But, Father, when the dregs I drain,  
On this new Calvary,  
My love shall take away all pain,  
When men shall turn to me  
I'll heal the wounded broken soul  
And, Father, grant to Me  
That power be mine as years shall roll—  
To turn their hearts to Thee.

Aug. 30, 1914.

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## EASTER

---

I would that from out our lives  
The Winter of sickness  
And sorrow  
And misunderstanding  
Would pass.  
And that the marvel of the Spring,  
The RESURRECTION! of light—perfect light,  
And the sunshine of LOVE! perfect LOVE;  
For all of God's Creation would come  
As the Spring brings grass,  
Softly.

March 23, 1913.

## THE SHIPS THAT GO OUT

---

I sit on the hillside and watch them,  
All they who go down to the sea,  
And I watch the white sails  
As they bend to the gales  
And the gulls as they fly 'neath the clouds rushing  
by—  
They all tell their story to me.

They have called as they passed on their way,  
They've asked why I sit me to rest  
In the shade of the tree  
When the great rolling sea  
Is calling so loud, when the wind and the cloud  
All rush to the gold tinted west?

Asking in turn why they sail away  
When there's wealth and health at my feet.  
But they dance in their glee,  
Waving farewell to me;  
"Oh the water is blue, and our sweethearts are true  
And the wind on the wave is sweet."

But I've seen when the ships 'turn again—  
The sails are all battered and torn,  
And the youth that was free  
Has gone down in the sea,  
There to rest evermore, 'neath the waves sullen roar,  
And the home he left is forlorn.

But the sailors are born for the sea;  
The plowmen are bound to the land,  
And God's way is the best  
For He brings them to rest,  
From their labor and toil, from the rush and the  
moil,  
To the fold and care of His hand.

July 23, 1913.

## A WAYSIDE TALE

---

Oh the heart of me, friend, is alive, yet dead;  
And the soul is all battered and torn,  
All white is the blood, tho its color seems red,  
And the body still lives, tho it's worn.

Have I loved? yes friend; with all of my heart;  
And it bloomed like a flower, then died.  
That set me a-wondering; set me apart,  
And sapped all my ambition and pride.

No! that it not true, for the pride is all left,  
And my heart has grown bigger and sad;  
And pity awoke when my soul was bereft,  
And I'm helped by the love that I had.

In the day or at night, sometime I will find  
A soul that is trampled and weary;  
And I shall find ways, to be helpful and kind  
To the heart that is bowed and dreary.

So the heart of me, friend, has found surcease;  
And my soul has now found a new song,  
And God in his mercy has given me peace,  
And a work—tho the road may be long.

January 17, 1914.

## NIGHT IN CALIFORNIA

---

When the sun is sinking slow  
Behind the mountains blue and white,  
And the mist upon the town is falling low;  
When the mocker's sleepy note  
Seems to stifle in his throat—  
Then to us in California, it is night.

When the Mission's chapel bell  
Is ringing out calm and clear and light;  
And the padre's gentle Ave seems to swell,  
Till the nightingale's sweet song  
Seems the beauty to prolong—  
Then to us in California, it is night.

When the 'cacia's scented flower  
And the orange blossom white  
Seem to lend a subtle fragrance to the hour.  
When the palm tree's gentle sigh  
Breathes a tale of days gone by—  
Then to us in California, it is night.

Nov. 1902.

## WALKING BY THE WAY

---

In nights of darkness, Lord, let me  
With full contentment walk with Thee.  
Walking freely, as with brother,  
Serving, trusting one another.

When sunshine floods the way with light,  
And I would climb the mountain's height,  
The night remembering, let me  
In gratefulness, still walk with Thee.

When paths are smooth, so prone my feet  
To wander off in by-ways sweet,  
Where beauty hides the poison vine,  
Or loosened stones, for feet like mine.

Walk with me, Lord, and counsel give.  
Teach me to love, to help, to live.  
When danger does my way entwine,  
Lord, let me feel Thy hand in mine.

With hand in Thine, let me reach out  
My other hand to those about,  
Who know Thee not, Oh, Gentle Friend,  
Let me their needs and wants attend.

And so, dear Lord, along the way,  
A brotherhood from day to day  
Shall fill the paths on land and sea,  
'Till all the world is linked with Thee.

Nov. 16, 1914.

## PROGRESS

(On meeting an old friend.)

---

The man you meet is not the man you knew,  
Though bones and skin and the strong sinew  
Have held their place and the heart is true.  
I have builded much with bolt and screw;  
I'm a larger man than the man you knew.

I have suffered pain, I have had my loss,  
I have bowed my knees beneath my cross,  
I've served as hireling and been the boss,  
I've been rolling stone, I've gathered moss,  
I have sown good gold, and I've garnered dross.

I've battled power when my strength was weak;  
Talked when my heart was afraid to speak;  
I've sought when men forbade me seek;  
Been bold when they said I should be meek  
And I have worked a month to gain a week.

I believe in God and I trust His word  
He has fed me as He feeds a bird.  
But many have called my faith absurd—  
I know I've sinned and I know I've erred  
For flesh is weak and the sight is blurred.

But a better man, a man fairly true,  
Stands in the place of the man you knew,  
A man who has gained a broader view,  
Has found a work which he hopes to do  
And to be the man which you thought you knew.

June 23, 1914.

## TO THE LADY WHO HELPED

---

If I come to your place, some morning fine,  
And you are not there to see  
These scribblings, rambling and jottings of mine,  
Lady, how dark it will be.

I mean if they say, you have gone away,  
To other scenes and faces,  
And you may not return, a-lac-a-day,  
Lady; I'll miss your graces.

You are no critic, you are far too kind,  
Your smile is surpassing sweet;  
If the verse is wrong, excuses you find,  
If fair, they're "perfect," "complete."

Lady: I'll miss you, you've helped many ways,  
I'll miss your smile and be sad;  
But I'll not forget you thru all the days  
You've helped me and made me glad.

Sept. 2, 1914.



## HE WALKS ALONE

---

He who walks upward to the light,  
Must walk alone.  
Condemned if he be wrong or right,  
Condemned alone.  
Unhelped by friends, beset by foes,  
Misunderstood, however he goes,  
Whether his life blood ebbs or flows,  
He walks alone.

And if he loves, they doubt him still,  
And turn away.  
They fear he hopes to do them ill,  
Or gain some sway.  
And he, poor dreamer, struggles on  
Silent and sad, he seeks the dawn,  
Where they may stand when he is gone,  
But seeks alone.

His foe who speaks with bitter tongue,  
Is often heard.  
He turns to friends when heart is wrung,  
They doubt his word.  
Seeing the light upon his way,  
Nor foe, nor friend may bid him stay,  
Hid from their sight, he stops to pray;  
And walks alone.

February 7, 1914.

## MY EPITAPH

(A remembrance at Christmas.)

---

Build not for me a funeral pyre  
Of sacred, ancient wood.  
To such acclaim, who can aspire?  
The Master said "none good";  
And I, as shadow on the wall,  
Here for a moment thrust,  
Of God an atom, yet how small,  
How quickly turned to dust.

Let not the world in solemn state  
This fallen form survey,  
For death but opens wide the gate  
And shows the perfect way;  
But I, unworthy, there shall be,  
Nor dare my name to own,  
So much of time misspent by me;  
So great the work not done.

Let children sing at evening's close,  
A requiem low and sweet,  
As tribute from each friend, a rose,  
No greater boon is mete;  
But passing say one prayer for me  
That laid beneath the sod.  
As I served men, so let it be,  
I may receive from God.

December, 1912.



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