

Alex Catalogue of Electronic Texts Collection

Project Gutenberg Consortia Center  
Bringing the world's eBook Collection Together  
<http://www.Gutenberg.us>

Project Gutenberg Consortia Center is a member of the  
World eBook Library Consortia, <http://WorldLibrary.net>

The mission of the Project Gutenberg Consortia Center  
is to provide a similar framework for the collection  
of eBook collections as does Project Gutenberg for  
single eBooks, operating under the practices,  
and general guidelines of Project Gutenberg.

The major additional function of Project Gutenberg  
Consortia Center is to manage the addition of large  
collections of eBooks from other eBook creation and  
collection centers around the world.

For great classic literature visit:

Project Gutenberg Consortia Center Bringing the world's  
eBook Collection Together <http://www.Gutenberg.us>

1899  
WAR IS KIND AND OTHER LINES  
by Stephen Crane

I  
Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind.  
Because your lover threw wild hands toward the sky  
And the affrighted steed ran on alone,  
Do not weep.  
War is kind.

Hoarse, booming drums of the regiment,  
Little souls who thirst for fight,  
These men were born to drill and die.  
The unexplained glory flies above them,

Great is the battle-god, great, and his kingdom --  
A field where a thousand corpses lie.

Do not weep, babe, for war is kind.  
Because your father tumbled in the yellow trenches,  
Raged at his breast, gulped and died,  
Do not weep.  
War is kind.

Swift blazing flag of the regiment,  
Eagle with crest of red and gold,  
These men were born to drill and die.  
Point for them the virtue of slaughter,  
Make plain to them the excellence of killing  
And a field where a thousand corpses lie.

Mother whose heart hung humble as a button  
On the bright splendid shroud of your son,  
Do not weep.  
War is kind.

II

"What says the sea, little shell?  
What says the sea?  
Long has our brother been silent to us,  
Kept his message for the ships,  
Awkward ships, stupid ships."

"The sea bids you mourn, O Pines,  
Sing low in the moonlight.  
He sends tale of the land of doom,  
Of place where endless falls  
A rain of women's tears,  
And men in grey robes --  
Men in grey robes --  
Chant the unknown pain."

"What says the sea, little shell?  
What says the sea?  
Long has our brother been silent to us,  
Kept his message for the ships,  
Puny ships, silly ships."

"The sea bids you teach, O Pines,  
Sing low in the moonlight;  
Teach the gold of patience,  
Cry gospel of gentle hands,  
Cry a brotherhood of hearts.  
The sea bids you teach, O Pines."

"And where is the reward, little shell?  
What says the sea?  
Long has our brother been silent to us,

Kept his message for the ships,  
Puny ships, silly ships."

"No word says the sea, O Pines,  
No word says the sea.  
Long will your brother be silent to you,  
Keep his message for the ships,  
O puny pines, silly pines."

III

To the maiden  
The sea was blue meadow,  
Alive with little froth-people  
Singing.

To the sailor, wrecked,  
The sea was dead grey walls  
Superlative in vacancy,  
Upon which nevertheless at fateful time  
Was written  
The grim hatred of nature.

IV

A little ink more or less!  
I surely can't matter?  
Even the sky and the opulent sea,  
The plains and the hills, aloof,  
Hear the uproar of all these books.  
But it is only a little ink more or less.

What?  
You define me God with these trinkets?  
Can my misery meal on an ordered walking  
Of surplused numskulls?  
And a fanfare of lights?  
Or even upon the measured pulpittings  
Of the familiar false and true?  
Is this God?  
Where, then, is hell?  
Show me some bastard mushroom  
Sprung from a pollution of blood.  
It is better.

Where is God?

V

"Have you ever made a just man?"  
"Oh, I have made three," answered God,  
"But two of them are dead,  
And the third --  
Listen! Listen!  
And you will hear the thud of his defeat."

VI

I explain the silvered passing of a ship at night,  
The sweep of each sad lost wave,  
The dwindling boom of the steel thing's striving,  
The little cry of a man to a man,  
A shadow falling across the greyer night,  
And the sinking of the small star;  
Then the waste, the far waste of waters,  
And the soft lashing of black waves  
For long and in loneliness.

Remember, thou, O ship of love,  
Thou leavest a far waste of waters,  
And the soft lashing of black waves  
For long and in loneliness.

VII

"I have heard the sunset song of the birches,  
A white melody in the silence,  
I have seen a quarrel of the pines.  
At nightfall  
The little grasses have rushed by me  
With the wind men.  
These things have I lived," quoth the maniac,  
"Possessing only eyes and ears.  
But you --  
You don green spectacles before you look at roses."

VIII

Fast rode the knight  
With spurs, hot and reeking,  
Ever waving an eager sword,  
"To save my lady!"  
Fast rode the knight,  
And leaped from saddle to war.  
Men of steel flickered and gleamed  
Like riot of silver lights,  
And the gold of the knight's good banner  
Still waved on a castle wall.

. . . . .  
A horse,  
Blowing, staggering, bloody thing,  
Forgotten at foot of castle wall.  
A horse  
Dead at foot of castle wall.

IX

Forth went the candid man  
And spoke freely to the wind --  
When he looked about him he was in a far strange country.

Forth went the candid man  
And spoke freely to the stars --

Yellow light tore sight from his eyes.

"My good fool," said a learned bystander,  
"Your operations are mad."

"You are too candid," cried the candid man,  
And when his stick left the head of the learned bystander  
It was two sticks.

X

You tell me this is God?  
I tell you this is a printed list,  
A burning candle, and an ass.

XI

On the desert  
A silence from the moon's deepest valley.  
Fire rays fall athwart the robes  
Of hooded men, squat and dumb.  
Before them, a woman  
Moves to the blowing of shrill whistles  
And distant thunder of drums,  
While mystic things, sinuous, dull with terrible colour,  
Sleepily fondle her body  
Or move at her will, swishing stealthily over the sand.  
The snakes whisper softly;  
The whispering, whispering snakes,  
Dreaming and swaying and staring,  
But always whispering, softly whispering.  
The wind streams from the lone reaches  
Of Arabia, solemn with night,  
And the wild fire makes shimmer of blood  
Over the robes of the hooded men  
Squat and dumb.  
Bands of moving bronze, emerald, yellow,  
Circle the throat and the arms of her,  
And over the sands serpents move warily  
Slow, menacing and submissive,  
Swinging to the whistles and drums,  
The whispering, whispering snakes,  
Dreaming and swaying and staring,  
But always whispering, softly whispering.  
The dignity of the accursed;  
The glory of slavery, despair, death,  
Is in the dance of the whispering snakes.

XII

A newspaper is a collection of half-injustices  
Which, bawled by boys from mile to mile,  
Spreads its curious opinion  
To a million merciful and sneering men,  
While families cuddle the joys of the fireside  
When spurred by tale of dire lone agony.

A newspaper is a court  
Where every one is kindly and unfairly tried  
By a squalor of honest men.  
A newspaper is a market  
Where wisdom sells its freedom  
And melons are crowned by the crowd.  
A newspaper is a game  
Where his error scores the player victory  
While another's skill wins death.  
A newspaper is a symbol;  
It is feckless life's chronicle,  
A collection of loud tales  
Concentrating eternal stupidities,  
That in remote ages lived unaltered,  
Roaming through a fenceless world.  
XIII

The wayfarer,  
Perceiving the pathway to truth,  
Was struck with astonishment.  
It was thickly grown with weeds.  
"Ha," he said,  
"I see that none has passed here  
In a long time."  
Later he saw that each weed  
Was a singular knife.  
"Well," he mumbled at last,  
"Doubtless there are other roads."  
XIV

A slant of sun on dull brown walls,  
A forgotten sky of bashful blue.

Toward God a mighty hymn,  
A song of collisions and cries,  
Rumbling wheels, hoof-beats, bells,  
Welcomes, farewells, love-calls, final moans,  
Voices of joy, idiocy, warning, despair,  
The unknown appeals of brutes,  
The chanting of flowers,  
The screams of cut trees,  
The senseless babble of hens and wise men --  
A cluttered incoherency that says at the stars:  
"O God, save us!"  
XV

Once a man clambering to the housetops  
Appealed to the heavens.  
With strong voice he called to the deaf spheres;  
A warrior's shout he raised to the suns.  
Lo, at last, there was a dot on the clouds,  
And -- at last and at last --  
-- God -- the sky was filled with armies.

## XVI

There was a man with tongue of wood  
Who essayed to sing,  
And in truth it was lamentable.  
But there was one who heard  
The clip-clapper of this tongue of wood  
And knew what the man  
Wished to sing,  
And with that the singer was content.

## XVII

The successful man has thrust himself  
Through the water of the years,  
Reeking wet with mistakes --  
Bloody mistakes;  
Slimed with victories over the lesser,  
A figure thankful on the shore of money.  
Then, with the bones of fools  
He buys silken banners  
Limned with his triumphant face;  
With the skins of wise men  
He buys the trivial bows of all.  
Flesh painted with marrow  
Contributes a coverlet,  
A coverlet for his contented slumber.  
In guiltless ignorance, in ignorant guilt,  
He delivered his secrets to the riven multitude.  
"Thus I defended: Thus I wrought."  
Complacent, smiling,  
He stands heavily on the dead.  
Erect on a pillar of skulls  
He declaims his trampling of babes;  
Smirking, fat, dripping,  
He makes speech in guiltless ignorance,  
Innocence.

## XVIII

In the night  
Grey heavy clouds muffled the valleys,  
And the peaks looked toward God alone.  
"O Master that movest the wind with a finger,  
Humble, idle, futile peaks are we.  
Grant that we may run swiftly across the world  
To huddle in worship at Thy feet."

In the morning  
A noise of men at work came the clear blue miles,  
And the little black cities were apparent.  
"O Master that knowest the meaning of raindrops,  
Humble, idle, futile peaks are we.  
Give voice to us, we pray, O Lord,  
That we may sing Thy goodness to the sun."

In the evening  
The far valleys were sprinkled with tiny lights.  
"O Master,  
Thou that knowest the value of kings and birds,  
Thou hast made us humble, idle futile peaks.  
Thou only needest eternal patience;  
We bow to Thy wisdom, O Lord --  
Humble, idle, futile peaks."

In the night  
Grey heavy clouds muffled the valleys,  
And the peaks looked toward God alone.  
XIX

The chatter of a death-demon from a tree-top

Blood -- blood and torn grass --  
Had marked the rise of his agony --  
This lone hunter.  
The grey-green woods impassive  
Had watched the threshing of his limbs.

A canoe with flashing paddle,  
A girl with soft searching eyes,  
A call: "John!"

. . . . .  
Come, arise, hunter!  
Can you not hear?

The chatter of a death-demon from a tree-top.  
XX

The impact of a dollar upon the heart  
Smiles warm red light,  
Sweeping from the hearth rosily upon the white table,  
With the hanging cool velvet shadows  
Moving softly upon the door.

The impact of a million dollars  
Is a crash of flunkeys,  
And yawning emblems of Persia  
Cheeked against oak, France and a sabre,  
The outcry of old beauty  
Whored by pimping merchants  
To submission before wine and chatter.  
Silly rich peasants stamp the carpets of men,  
Dead men who dreamed fragrance and light  
Into their woof, their lives;  
The rug of an honest bear  
Under the feet of a cryptic slave  
Who speaks always of baubles,  
Forgetting state, multitude, work, and state,



Champing and mouthing of hats,  
Making ratful squeak of hats,  
Hats.  
XXI

A man said to the universe:  
"Sir I exist!"  
"However," replied the universe,  
"The fact has not created in me  
A sense of obligation."  
XXII

When the prophet, a complacent fat man,  
Arrived at the mountain-top,  
He cried: "Woe to my knowledge!  
I intended to see good white lands  
And bad black lands,  
But the scene is grey."  
XXIII

There was a land where lived no violets.  
A traveller at once demanded : "Why?"  
The people told him:  
"Once the violets of this place spoke thus:  
'Until some woman freely gives her lover  
To another woman  
We will fight in bloody scuffle.'  
Sadly the people added:  
"There are no violets here."  
XXIV

Ay, workman, make me a dream,  
A dream for my love.  
Cunningly weave sunlight,  
Breezes, and flowers.  
Let it be of the cloth of meadows.  
And -- good workman --  
And let there be a man walking thereon.  
XXV

Each small gleam was a voice,  
A lantern voice --  
In little songs of carmine, violet, green, gold.  
A chorus of colours came over the water;  
The wondrous leaf-shadow no longer wavered,  
No pines crooned on the hills,  
The blue night was elsewhere a silence,  
When the chorus of colours came over the water,  
Little songs of carmine, violet, green, gold.

Small glowing pebbles  
Thrown on the dark plane of evening  
Sing good ballads of God

And eternity, with soul's rest.  
Little priests, little holy fathers,  
None can doubt the truth of your hymning,  
When the marvellous chorus comes over the water,  
Songs of carmine, violet, green, gold.  
XXVI

The trees in the garden rained flowers.  
Children ran there joyously.  
They gathered the flowers  
Each to himself.  
Now there were some  
Who gathered great heaps --  
Having opportunity and skill --  
Until, behold, only chance blossoms  
Remained for the feeble.  
Then a little spindling tutor  
Ran importantly to the father, crying:  
"Pray, come hither!  
See this unjust thing in your garden!"  
But when the father had surveyed,  
He admonished the tutor:  
"Not so, small sage!  
This thing is just.  
For, look you,  
Are not they who possess the flowers  
Stronger, bolder, shrewder  
Than they who have none?  
Why should the strong --  
The beautiful strong --  
Why should they not have the flowers?"  
Upon reflection, the tutor bowed to the ground,  
"My lord," he said,  
"The stars are displaced  
By this towering wisdom."  
XXVII

When a people reach the top of a hill,  
Then does God lean toward them,  
Shortens tongues and lengthens arms.  
A vision of their dead comes to the weak.  
The moon shall not be too old  
Before the new battalions rise,  
    Blue battalions.  
The moon shall not be too old  
When the children of change shall fall  
Before the new battalions,  
    The blue battalions.

Mistakes and virtues will be trampled deep.  
A church and a thief shall fall together.  
A sword will come at the bidding of the eyeless,  
The God-led, turning only to beckon,

Swinging a creed like a censer  
At the head of the new battalions,  
Blue battalions.  
March the tools of nature's impulse,  
Men born of wrong, men born of right,  
Men of the new battalions,  
The blue battalions.

The clang of swords is Thy wisdom,  
The wounded make gestures like Thy Son's;  
The feet of mad horses is one part --  
Ay, another is the hand of a mother on the brow of a youth.  
Then, swift as they charge through a shadow,  
The men of the new battalions,  
Blue battalions --  
God lead them high, God lead them far,  
God lead them far, God lead them high,  
These new battalions,  
The blue battalions.  
THE END

For great classic literature visit:

Project Gutenberg Consortia Center Bringing the world's  
eBook Collection Together <http://www.Gutenberg.us>