

EMMA LAZARUS:
SELECTED POEMS AND
OTHER WRITINGS

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Ontario

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25 Even as the Prophet promised, so your tent
Hath been enlarged unto earth's farthest rim.
To snow-capped Sierras from vast steppes ye went,
Through fire and blood and tempest-tossing wave,
30 For freedom to proclaim and worship Him,
Mighty to slay and save.

High above flood and fire ye held the scroll,
Out of the depths ye published still the Word.
No bodily pang had power to swerve your soul:
Ye, in a cynic age of crumbling faiths,
35 Lived to bear witness to the living Lord,
Or died a thousand deaths.

In two divided streams the exiles part,
One rolling homeward to its ancient source,
One rushing sunward with fresh will, new heart.
40 By each the truth is spread, the law unfurled,
Each separate soul contains the nation's force,
And both embrace the world.

Kindle the silver candle's seven rays,
Offer the firstfruits of the clustered bowers,
45 The garnered spoil of bees. With prayer and praise
Rejoice that once more tried, once more we prove
How strength of supreme suffering still is ours
For Truth and Law and Love.

The Crowing of the Red Cock.¹ (1882)

Across the Eastern sky has glowed
The flicker of a blood-red dawn,
Once more the clarion cock has crowed,
Once more the sword of Christ is drawn.

¹ The title is a Russian euphemism for the burning of Jewish towns. See "The Persecution of the Jews in Russia," *The Times*, in Appendix D.

A million burning rooftrees light 5
The world-wide path of Israel's flight.

Where is the Hebrew's fatherland?
The folk of Christ is sore bested;
The Son of Man is bruised and banned,
Nor finds whereon to lay his head. 10
His cup is gall, his meat is tears,
His passion lasts a thousand years.

Each crime that wakes in man the beast,
Is visited upon his kind.
The lust of mobs, the greed of priest, 15
The tyranny of kings, combined
To root his seed from earth again,
His record is one cry of pain.

When the long roll of Christian guilt
Against his sires and kin is known, 20
The flood of tears, the life-blood spilt
The agony of ages shown,
What oceans can the stain remove,
From Christian law and Christian love?

Nay, close the book; not now, not here, 25
The hideous tale of sin narrate,
Reëchoing in the martyr's ear,
Even he might nurse revengeful hate,
Even he might turn in wrath sublime,
With blood for blood and crime for crime. 30

Coward? Not he, who faces death,
Who singly against worlds has fought,
For what? A name he may not breathe,
For liberty of prayer and thought. 35
The angry sword he will not whet,
His nobler task is—to forget.