

***ELLA WHEELER
WILCOX***

***CUSTER,
AND
OTHER
POEMS***

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Custer, and Other Poems

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[\(Suggested by the lives of Napoleon and Josephine.\)](#)

I.

II.

Preparation

Custer

BOOK FIRST.

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BOOK SECOND.

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CHICAGO

PREFACE.

**"Let such teach others, who
themselves excel,**

**And censure freely who have written
well."**

—POPE.

The World's Need

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So many gods, so many creeds,
So many paths that wind and wind,
While just the art of being kind,
Is all the sad world needs.

High Noon

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Time's finger on the dial of my life
Points to high noon! and yet the half-spent day

Leaves less than half remaining, for the dark,
Bleak shadows of the grave engulf the end.

To those who burn the candle to the stick,
The sputtering socket yields but little light.
Long life is sadder than an early death.
We cannot count on raveled threads of age
Whereof to weave a fabric. We must use
The warp and woof the ready present yields
And toil while daylight lasts. When I bethink
How brief the past, the future still more brief,
Calls on to action, action! Not for me
Is time for retrospection or for dreams,
Not time for self-laudation or remorse.
Have I done nobly? Then I must not let
Dead yesterday unborn to-morrow shame.
Have I done wrong? Well, let the bitter taste
Of fruit that turned to ashes on my lip
Be my reminder in temptation's hour,
And keep me silent when I would condemn.
Sometimes it takes the acid of a sin
To cleanse the clouded windows of our souls
So pity may shine through them.

Looking back,
My faults and errors seem like stepping-stones
That led the way to knowledge of the truth
And made me value virtue; sorrows shine
In rainbow colors o'er the gulf of years,
Where lie forgotten pleasures.

Looking forth,
Out to the western sky still bright with noon,