

**A HERMIT OF
CARMEL AND
OTHER POEMS**

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A hermit of Carmel and other poems by George Santayana

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GEORGE SANTAYANA

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CARMEL AND
OTHER POEMS**

A Hermit of Carmel

And Other Poems

By

George Santayana

New York

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1901

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
A HERMIT OF CARMEL	3
THE KNIGHT'S RETURN. A Sequel to A Hermit of Carmel	45
ELEGIAC AND LYRIC POEMS	83
Premonition	85
Solipsism	87
Sybaris	89
Avila	94
King's College Chapel	99
On an Unfinished Statue	107
Midnight	112
In Grantchester Meadows	114
Futility	116
Before a Statue of Achilles	117
Odi et Amo	120
Cathedrals by the Sea	122
Mont Brévent	123
The Rustic at the Play	124
Resurrection	125

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	PAGE
TRANSLATIONS	139
From Michael Angelo	141
- From Alfred de Musset: <i>Souvenir</i>	144
From Théophile Gautier: <i>L'Art</i>	156
- CONVIVIAL AND OCCASIONAL VERSES	161
Prosit Neujahr	163
Fair Harvard	164
College Drinking Song	167
Six Wise Fools	170
Athletic Ode	185
The Bottles and the Wine	192
The Poetic Medium	198
Young Sammy's first Wild Oats	204
Spain in America	216
Youth's Immortality	232

A HERMIT OF CARMEL

A HERMIT OF CARMEL

SCENE. — *A ravine amid the slopes of Mount Carmel.
On one side a hermitage, on the other a rustic
cross. The sun is about to set in the sea, which
fills the background.*

HERMIT. Thou who wast tempted in the wilderness,
Guard me this night, for there are snares in sleep
That baffle watching. O poisoned, bitter life
Of doubt and longing! Were death possible,
Who would not choose it? But that dim estate
Might plunge my witless ghost in grosser matter
And in still closer meshes choke my life.
Yet thus to live is grievous agony,
When sleep and thirst, hunger and weariness,

And the sharp goads of thought-awakened lust
Torture the flesh, and inward doubt of all
Embitters with its lurking mockery
Virtue's sad victorics. This wilderness
Whither I fly from the approach of men
Keeps not the devil out. The treacherous glens
Are full of imps, and ghosts in moonlit vesture
Startle the watches of the lidless night.
The giant forest, in my youth so fair,
Is now a den of demons ; the hoarse sea
Is foul with monsters hungry for my soul ;
The dark and pregnant soil, once innocent
Mother of flowers, reeks with venomous worms,
And sore temptation is in all the world.
But hist ! A sound, as if of clanking hoofs.
Saint Anthony protect me from the fiend,
Whether he come in guise of hornèd beast
Or of pernicious man ! If I must die
Be it upon this hallowed ground, O Lord !

[Hides in the hut.]