

# **AN ALPHABET OF HISTORY**

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An Alphabet of History by Wilbur D. Nesbit

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**WILBUR D. NESBIT**

**AN ALPHABET  
OF HISTORY**



NO. 114  
ANGEL



# AN ALPHABET OF HISTORY

*The Words by Wilbur  
D. Nesbit · The Pictures  
by Ellsworth Young*

Who frets about the mystery  
Enshrouding all of history  
On reading this will, maybe, see  
We've made it plain as A, B, C.

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TO VINU  
CALIFORNIA

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San Francisco

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# ALEXANDER THE GREAT



Alexander the Great was a victim of fate,  
And he sighed there was naught to delight him  
When he brandished his sword and defiantly roared  
And could not get a country to fight him.

All the armies he'd chased, all the lands laid to  
waste,

And he clamored for further diversions;  
And our history speaks of his grip on the Greeks  
And his hammerlock hold on the Persians.

Though the Gordian knot, cut in two, in a spot  
In his palace was labeled a relic,  
Though Bucephalus, stuffed, gave him fame, he was  
huffed—

He was grouchy and grumpy, was Aleck.

And the cause of his woe, he would have you to  
know,

Was the fact that he never was able  
To conduct a big scrap that a versatile chap  
Of a war correspondent would cable.

'Stead of being quite glad, he would grow very sad  
When he told of the fellows who'd fought him,  
As he thought of the lack of the clicking kodak  
In the hands of a man to "snapshot" him.

We are told that he wept, and in dolefulness crept  
Through his palace—the reason is hinted:  
There were not at that time magazines for a dime,  
And his articles could not be printed.

Though it may seem unkind, ere his life we've  
outlined,

We must say in some ways he was hateful;  
And in truth, we have heard he went back on his  
word,

And was not Alexander the Grateful.

340146





# BRUTUS

Back in the time of Rome sublime,  
There lived great Julius Caesar  
Who wore the crown with haughty  
frown  
And was a frosty geezer.

Three times, they say, upon the way  
Called Lupercal, they fetched it  
For him to wear, but then and there  
He said they should have stretched it.

And we are told that Jule was cold  
And frigid as Alaska,  
Ambitious, too,—that would not do  
For Cassius and Casca.

They told their friends: "It all depends  
On having things to suit us.  
We think that Jule is much too cool;  
Let us conspire with Brutus."

They furthermore let out this roar:  
"Shall Caesar further scoff us?  
Next week, they say, he'll have his way  
About the Rome postoffice."

With dirk and sword in togas stored—  
You know those times they wore 'em—  
They made a muss of Ju-li-us  
One morning in the Forum.

With "Et tu, Brute?" J. C. grew mute.  
(Some claim it's "Et tu, Bru-te";  
We mention it both whole and split  
As is our bounden duty.)

Mark Antony arose, and he  
Talked some,—we shall not quote it;  
We've understood 'twas not as good  
As when Bill Shakespeare wrote it.

Then Brutus skipped lest he be nipped—  
And since his dissolution  
He's been accused and much abused  
In schools of elocution.



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 CHRISTOPHER  
 COLUMBUS

When Christopher Columbus stood the egg upon  
 its end,  
 He solved a weighty problem that no one could  
 comprehend—  
 Perhaps it was the puzzle whose solution clearly  
 showed  
 The psychologic motives of the hen that crossed  
 the road.  
 Perhaps cold storage minstrels never might have  
 heard of this  
 If it hadn't been for Chris.

Columbus packed his little grip and got upon the  
 train  
 And went to see that noble man, King Ferdinand  
 of Spain.  
 Result: He found America—oh, do not idly nod,  
 For if it hadn't been for this we couldn't go abroad!  
 Just think of all the travel and the voyages we'd  
 miss  
 If it hadn't been for Chris.

Columbus found America and won a lot of fame—  
 Nobody ever thought to ask him how he knew its  
 name;  
 Nobody ever booked him for some lectures to  
 declare  
 In eloquent assertions how he knew the land was  
 there.  
 Today we might be savages, unknowing modern  
 bliss,  
 If it hadn't been for Chris.

He landed near Havana, and he said: "It seems  
 to me  
 That sometime in the future little Cuby shall be  
 free."  
 His vision was prophetic—far adown the future's  
 track  
 He saw the dauntless Hobson and the sinking  
 Merrimac.  
 We might have still been tyros in the ethics of  
 the kiss  
 If it hadn't been for Chris.

Today there are big cities and big buildings named  
 for him,

And yet he was so poor that once he thought he'd have to swim  
 To find this wondrous country, for he was so badly broke;  
 But Isabella nobly put her watch and ring in soak.  
 Who knows but Isabella never might have thought of this  
 If it hadn't been for Chris?



# DIOGENES

Diogenes lived in a tub  
His fellows analyzing;  
These words were carved upon his club:  
"First Class Philosophizing."  
If any question came his way  
Involving people's morals,  
The things that he felt moved to say  
Were sure to start some quarrels.  
In fact, his tub became a booth  
In which he dealt in wholesale truth.  
  
This world was but a fleeting show—  
He knew a lot about it;  
When he was told a thing was so  
He then began to doubt it.  
He seldom left his narrow home—  
Not even on a Sunday;  
The only time that he would roam  
Abroad was on a Monday.  
He had to roam then, anyway,  
For that, you know, is washing day.  
  
Society, with all its sham,  
Gave him a paroxysm;  
He always spoke in epigram  
And thought in aphorism.  
One day he took his lantern down  
And polished it and lit it—  
But first he frowned a peevish frown  
And growled: "The wick don't fit it."  
And then, with pessimistic scan,  
He sought to find an honest man.  
  
Diogenes has long been dead;  
His search was not well heeded,  
For no historian has said  
If ever he succeeded.  
But there's this thought for you and me:  
It would not be quite pleasant  
If on that quest the sage should be  
With his fierce light, at present.  
For, if he were, one may but think  
How much that light would make him blink.