

Classic Poetry Series

Sabine Baring-Gould
- poems -

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Sabine Baring-Gould(1834 - 1924)

Sabine Baring-Gould was born in Exeter in 1834. Although well educated much of his learning came from his travels through Europe when he was a boy and young man.

At the age of 3 he travelled through Europe with his parents. This was an incredible 13 year journey during which time he learnt 6 languages but little else. His days at Cambridge University were unusual in that his knowledge of scholarly life was virtually non-existent preferring as he did to be a loner.

Sabine Baring-Gould was a prolific writer. At one point there were more books listed under his name in the British Museum Library than under that of any other English writer.

At 30 Sabine fulfilled his dream of taking Holy Orders. He served his curacy in the Yorkshire mill town of Horbury.

Whilst in Yorkshire he met a young mill girl called Grace Taylor.

It is said that the romance between Sabine and Grace led to the story 'Pygmalion' which later became 'My Fair Lady'. At the time Sabine was friends with George Bernard Shaw.

Sabine married Grace Taylor in 1868 - they were married for 48 years - they had 15 children, all but one lived to adulthood. When he buried his wife in 1916 he had carved on her tombstone "Dimidium Animae Meae" (Half my Soul)

Whilst serving his curacy in Yorkshire he wrote the hymns 'Onward Christian Soldiers' and 'Now the Day is Over'.

Of the hymn 'Onward Christian Soldiers', he was surprised at the fame this brought him for he said he had dashed the words off in no more than ten minutes as an occasional piece for a procession of school children.

In 1871 Sabine Baring-Gould was installed as the rector of East Mersea in Essex. Here he spent 10 years of misery. He never understood the dull Essex peasants and found the mud flats of the countryside depressing.

In 1881, at the age of 47 Sabine Baring-Gould installed himself at Lew Trenchard as both Squire and Parson

He did a great deal of work restoring St. Peter's Church, Lew Trenchard and his

home Lew Trenchard Manor.

One of Sabine Baring-Gould's greatest achievements was the collection of local folk songs. He started this quest in 1888 and over three years he tracked down some 60 people and wrote down their songs.

All in all, he worked on this task for 12 years and travelled throughout Devon & Cornwall. He either travelled to singer's homes or invited them to his own home. Sabine Baring-Gould was not a good musician but could just about manage a one-fingered tune on the piano. To help him in this area he was helped by Dr. Frederick Bussell and the Reverend H.W. Fleetwood Sheppard. All his work culminated in the publication of 'Songs of the West'. This collection was first published in 1889.

Sabine Baring-Gould died in 1924, shortly before his 90th birthday at Lew Trenchard and was buried in his own churchyard next to his beloved wife Grace.

Child's Evening Hymn

NOW the day is over,
Night is drawing nigh,
Shadows of the evening
Steal across the sky.

Now the darkness gathers,
Stars begin to peep,
Birds and beasts and flowers
Soon will be asleep.

Jesu, give the weary
Calm and sweet repose;
With thy tenderest blessing
May our eyelids close.

Grant to little children
Visions bright of thee;
Guard the sailors tossing
On the deep blue sea.

Comfort every sufferer
Watching late in pain;
Those who plan some evil
From their sin restrain.

Through the long night-watches
May thine angels spread
Their white wings above me,
Watching round my bed.

When the morning wakens,
Then may I arise
Pure and fresh and sinless
In thy holy eyes.

Glory to the Father,
Glory to the Son,
And to thee, bless'd Spirit,
Whilst all ages run. AMEN

Sabine Baring-Gould

Daily, Daily, Sing The Praises

Daily, daily, sing the praises
Of the city God hath made;
In the beauteous fields of Eden
Its foundation stones are laid.

Refrain

O that I had wings of angels,
Here to spread and heavenward fly!
I would seek the gates of Zion,
Far beyond the starry sky.

All the walls of that dear city
Are of bright and burnished gold;
It is matchless in its beauty,
And its treasures are untold.

Refrain

In the midst of that dear city
Christ is reigning on His seat,
And the angels swing their censers
In a ring about His feet.

Refrain

From the throne a river issues,
Clear as crystal, passing bright,
And it traverses the city
Like a sudden beam of light.

Refrain

There the forests ever blossom,
Like our orchards here in May;
There the gardens never wither,
But eternally are gay.

Refrain

There the meadows green and dewy
Shine with lilies wondrous fair;
Thousand, thousand, are the colors
Of the waving flowers there.

Refrain

There the forests ever blossom,
Like our orchards here in May;
There the gardens never wither,
But eternally are gay.

Refrain

There the wind is sweetly fragrant,
And is laden with the song
Of the seraphs, and the elders,
And the great redeemed throng.

Refrain

O I would my ears were open
Here to catch that happy strain!
O I would my eyes some vision
Of that Eden would attain!

Refrain

Sabine Baring-Gould

Now The Day Is Over

Now the day is over,
Night is drawing nigh,
Shadows of the evening
Steal across the sky.

Now the darkness gathers,
Stars begin to peep,
Birds, and beasts and flowers
Soon will be asleep.

Jesus, give the weary
Calm and sweet repose;
With Thy tenderest blessing
May mine eyelids close.

Grant to little children
Visions bright of Thee;
Guard the sailors tossing
On the deep, blue sea.

Comfort those who suffer,
Watching late in pain;
Those who plan some evil
From their sin restrain.

Through the long night watches
May Thine angels spread
Their white wings above me,
Watching round my bed.

When the morning wakens,
Then may I arise
Pure, and fresh, and sinless
In Thy holy eyes.

Glory to the Father,
Glory to the Son,
And to Thee, blest Spirit,
While all ages run.

Sabine Baring-Gould

Onward Christian Soldiers

Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war,
With the Cross of Jesus
Going on before.
Christ the royal Master
Leads against the foe;
Forward into battle,
See, his banners go!
 Onward, Christian soldiers,
 Marching as to war,
 With the Cross of Jesus
 Going on before.

At the sign of triumph
Satan's legions flee;
On then, Christian soldiers,
On to victory.
Hell's foundations quiver
 At the shout of praise;
Brothers, lift your voices,
Loud your anthems raise.
Like a mighty army
Moves the Church of God;
Brothers, we are treading
Where the Saints have trod;
We are not divided,
All one body we,
One in hope and doctrine
One in charity:
Crowns and thorns may perish,
Kingdoms rise and wane,
But the Church of Jesus
Constant will remain;
Gates of hell can never
'Gainst that Church prevail;
We have Christ's own promise,
And that cannot fail.
Onward, then, ye people,
Join our happy throng,

Blend with ours your voices
In the triumph song;
Glory, laud and honour
Unto Christ the King;
This through countless ages
Men and Angels sing.
 Onward, Christian soldiers,
 Marching as to war,
 With the Cross of Jesus
 Going on before.

Sabine Baring-Gould