



***THOMAS  
NELSON PAGE***

***THE COAST  
OF BOHEMIA***

**Thomas Nelson Page**

# **The Coast of Bohemia**

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**PREFACE**

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One who after writing prose all his life suddenly essays to launch a volume of verse, must know something of the feeling with which an old-time sailor after coasting only his native shores found himself setting sail into an unknown sea.

The author of this little volume knows quite as well as the most experienced mariner the temerity of sailing an untried main in so frail a bark. But he is willing, if the Fates so decree, to go down with the unnumbered sail of that great fleet which have throughout the ages faced the wide ocean of oblivion, merely for the thrill of being for a brief space on its vast waters.

Since Horace, secure in the double endowment of genius and of an Emperor's favor, wrote scornfully how hated of gods and men was middling verse, no one has ever doubted the fact—perhaps, not even one of all the myriads who have

dared to brave that bitter scorn. The explanation then for the production of so much of the despised matter must be that there is for the minor poet also a music that the outer world does not catch—an inner day which the outer world does not see. It is this music, this light which, for the most part, is for the lesser poet his only reward. That he has heard, however brokenly, and at however vast a distance, snatches of those strains which thrilled the souls of Marlowe and Milton and Keats and Shelley, even though he may never reproduce one of them, is moreover a sufficiently high reward.

T. N. P.

\*\*\* Most of the poems in the following pages, with the exception of those in dialect, are now published for the first time.

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