

A BOOK OF FAMOUS VERSE

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A Book of Famous Verse by Agnes Repplier

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AGNES REPPLIER

**A BOOK OF
FAMOUS VERSE**

The Riverside Library for Young People



NUMBER 9

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SELECTED BY AGNES REPPLIER



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AGNES REPPLIER, LITT. D.



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INTRODUCTION

THE pleasant part of editing a little book like this is the gathering together of many well-loved poems; the heart-breaking part is the exclusion of quite as many more. "There is so much inviting us," says Mr. Arnold, "what are we to take?" How, in the ripened orchard, can we bear to fill one small basket, and go away leaving the boughs heavy with unplucked fruit? How, amid friends, can we open the door to a few, and bid the others wait? The enjoyment which children receive from poetry is far-reaching and of many kinds. Martial strains which fire the blood, fairy music ringing in the ears, half-told tales which set the young heart dreaming, brave deeds, unhappy fates, sombre ballads, keen joyous lyrics, and small jeweled verses where every word shines like a polished gem, — all these good things the children know and love. It is useless to offer them mere rhymes and jingles; it is ungenerous to stint their young, vigorous imaginations with obvious prattle, fitted dexterously to their understandings. In the matter of poetry, a child's ima-

gination outstrips his understanding; his emotions carry him far beyond the narrow reach of his intelligence. He has but one lesson to learn, — the lesson of enjoyment, — and that it hardly lies in our power to teach. We can but show him the fair fields of song, and let him glean where he will. All the harvest is ripened to his hand, and he knows where his own store lies.

In selecting these few poems I have had no other motive than to give pleasure to the children who may read them; and I have tried to study their tastes, and feelings, and desires. If I succeed, my reward will be very great; for to help a child to the love of poetry is to insure for him one source of happiness in a not too happy world. It is to charm and brighten the gray routine of life, and to lift him for some brief, sweet moments from all the cares, and vexations, and drudgeries of earth up to those shining abodes —

“where the Eternal are.”

A. R.

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