

**THE IDYLLS OF  
THEOCRITUS AND THE  
ECLOGUES OF VIRGIL**

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The Idylls of Theocritus and the Eclogues of Virgil by C. S. Calverley & R. Y. Tyrrell

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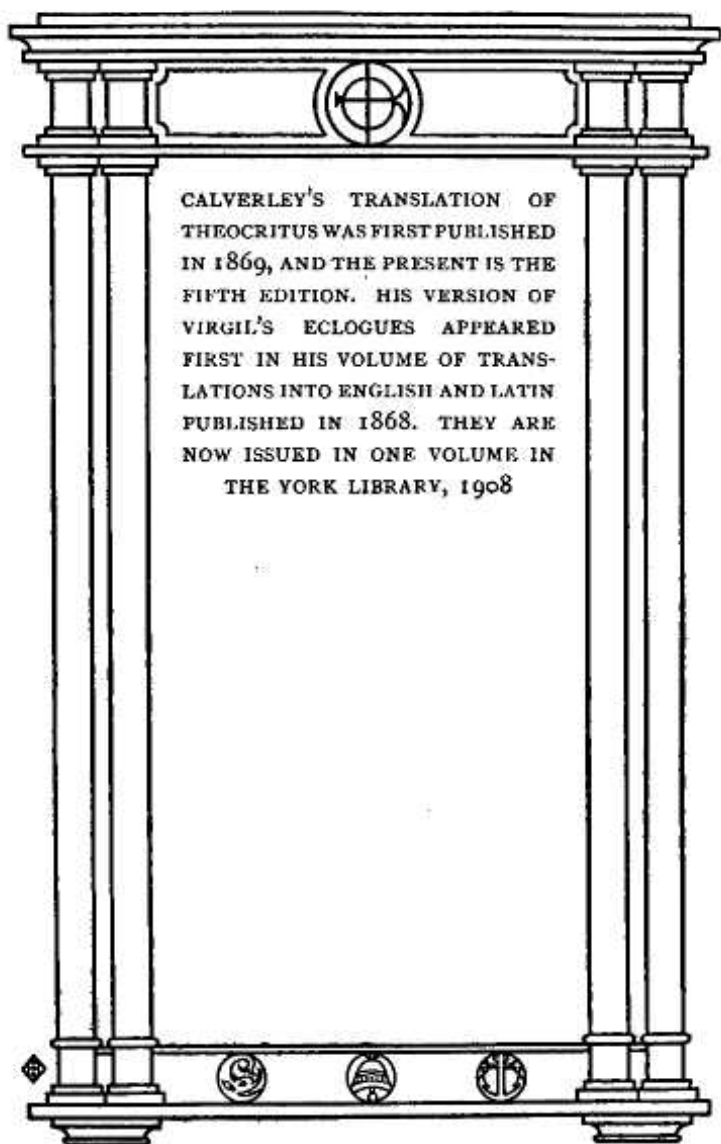
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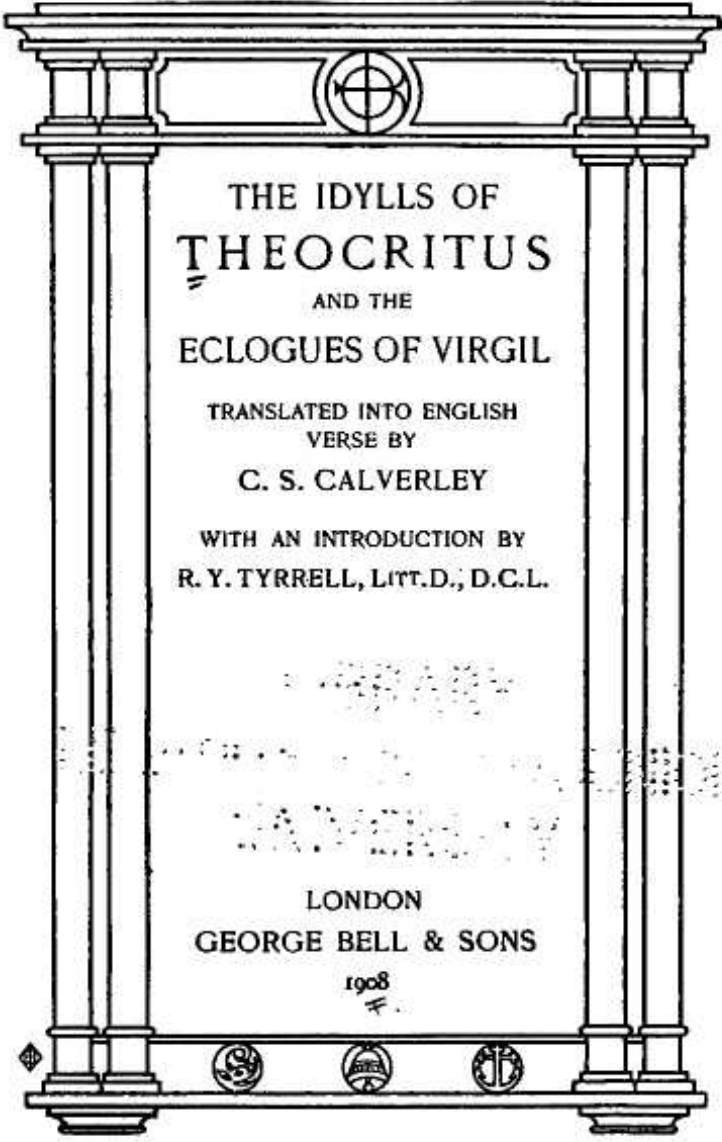
**C. S. CALVERLEY & R. Y. TYRRELL**

**THE IDYLLS OF  
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ECLOGUES OF VIRGIL**





CALVERLEY'S TRANSLATION OF  
THEOCRITUS WAS FIRST PUBLISHED  
IN 1869, AND THE PRESENT IS THE  
FIFTH EDITION. HIS VERSION OF  
VIRGIL'S ECLOGUES APPEARED  
FIRST IN HIS VOLUME OF TRANS-  
LATIONS INTO ENGLISH AND LATIN  
PUBLISHED IN 1868. THEY ARE  
NOW ISSUED IN ONE VOLUME IN  
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THE IDYLLS OF  
**THEOCRITUS**  
AND THE  
ECLOGUES OF VIRGIL

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH  
VERSE BY

C. S. CALVERLEY

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
R. Y. TYRRELL, Litt.D., D.C.L.

LONDON  
GEORGE BELL & SONS

1908

F.

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## INTRODUCTION.

IT was a happy thought to publish in a form separate from the whole works of Calverley, his translation of the *Idylls of Theocritus* and the *Eclogues of Virgil*. Perhaps no poems which have come down to us from the ancient world—certainly none of the comparatively small compass which the *Idylls* and the *Eclogues* embrace—have more completely won their way into the minds and hearts of British readers. Only ten Greek books were printed before Aldus began his fruitful labours, and only two of them were poets. Those two were Homer and Theocritus. In many respects they may be called the Alpha and Omega of Greek poetry. Though the Syracusan singer cannot claim a niche in the Temple of Fame as majestic as that of the incomparable Chian, yet it

is probable that very many more readers have been *startled* by the genius of Theocritus, because, while we make the acquaintance of Homer at a pre-critical stage of our development, Theocritus does not burst upon us until the critic is born in us, if destined ever to come to the birth. The bloom is rubbed off Homer during our school days. I shall never forget the astonishment with which I first read the Idylls, nor the conviction with which a fellow student—also introduced for the first time to Theocritus—maintained his marked superiority to the father of Epic poetry. For one must, with Sainte-Beuve, couple together the two poets as the supreme types of majesty and beauty in Greek poetry. Virgil's Eclogues, unlike the Idylls, meet us in early boyhood, and for the adult are clothed in the "celestial light" which plays round the morning of life.

Perhaps the most inspired of the Idylls, and that which has most potently fired the imagination of poets and lovers of poetry in all ages, is the second, *The Sorceress*, which tells the tale of Simaetha's love, her desertion, and the magic arts by which she tries to charm back to her the faithless Delphis. As a character-

istic specimen of the consummate art of the poet, and of the taste and skill of the translator, I would point to the passage where Simaetha describes to her handmaid Thestylis the first visit of the young athlete, whom she had summoned to cure her love-sickness :

*Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.*

He bent his pitiless eyes on me; looked down,  
And sate him on my couch, and sitting, said:  
"Thou hast gained on me, Simaetha, (e'en as I  
Gained once on young Philinus in the race),  
Bidding me hither ere I came unasked.

*Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.*

"For I had come, by Eros I had come,  
This night, with comrades twain or may-be more,  
The fruitage of the Wine-god in my robe,  
And, wound about my brow with ribands red  
The silver leaves so dear to Heracles.

*Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.*

"Had ye said 'Enter,' well: for 'mid my peers  
High is my name for goodliness and speed:  
I had kissed that sweet mouth once and gone my way.  
But had the door been barred, and I thrust out,  
With brand and axe would we have stormed ye then.

*Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.*

"Now be my thanks recorded, first to Love,  
Next to thee, maiden, who didst pluck me out,  
A half-burned helpless creature, from the flames,  
And badst me hither. It is Love that lights  
A fire more fierce than his of Lipara,

*(Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.)*