

**SELECT POEMS;
ELEVENTH EDITION**

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Select Poems; Eleventh Edition by Mrs. L. H. Sigourney

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MRS. L. H. SIGOURNEY

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MAIL



Miss Edgeworth's Remarks on Mrs. Sigourney's
Select Poems.

THE Publisher of "The Select Poems" has been permitted to make use of the following extracts of a communication from the late lamented MARIA EDGEWORTH, a name which, on both sides of the Atlantic, claims respect. She has expressed high approbation of the poems of Mrs. Sigourney in general, and from the volume thus designated, selects some of her favourites.

"CONNECTICUT RIVER, *page 16*, is fine poetry, and contains sentiments worthy of 'Gray's Country Church-yard,' without any thing like close imitation, and with touches and thoughts peculiar to America. From the 68th line to the close, it is strongly marked. Especially the lines,

'Lo! here they rest, who every danger braved,
Unmark'd, untrophied, 'mid the soil they saved,'

would serve as a fine epitaph or inscription for any burial-place of New Englanders.

"THE LOST DARLING, *page 150*, is very touching and natural; and the 'Lines to the Memory of a Young Lady,' *page 155*, are very beautiful. In the poem entitled 'Benevolence,' *page 181*, the passage beginning

'Point out to me the forms
That in your treasure-chambers shall enact
Glad mastership,—and revel where you toil'd
Sleepless, and stern.'

is worthy of Shakspeare, and might be read to the best judges as Shakspeare's own.

"INDIAN NAMES, page 258, is very poetical. In some shape or other, the Indians ought to send tokens of their gratitude to Mrs. Sigourney. They surely would, could all she has written of them, in eloquent strains, be interpreted to their feeling hearts.

"THE MOHEGAN CHURCH, page 323, is particularly admirable, both as poetry, and for the spirit in which it is written. Being recently asked for my autograph, I was glad to copy its nine concluding lines, and sign my name, as a testimony of admiration.

"THE SCHOOL-MISTRESS, page 329. I should like to see the picture to which it is stated that these lines were adapted. It must have had great merit as a painting, to have called forth such sympathy from the sister art.

"PARTING OF A MOTHER WITH HER CHILD, page 332. The child's not knowing the mother is a new circumstance well touched, and truly pathetic.

"Another remark has occurred to me, in reading these poems, that Mrs. Sigourney appears to have the power of writing *extempore*, on passing subjects, and at the moment they are called for. But few persons of genius, particularly of poetic genius, have ever possessed this power. She must have great command over her own mind, and what a celebrated physician used to call *voluntary attention*, in which most people are lamentably deficient, so that they can never write any thing well, when called upon for it, or when the subject is suggested, and the effect bespoken. These powers are twice valuable, that can well accomplish their purpose, on demand. Certainly, as it regards poetic gifts, those who give promptly, give twice.

"How few, even of professed and eminent poets have been able to produce any effusion worthy of their reputation, or even worth reading, on what the French call *des sujets de command*; and what we English describe as *on the spur of the moment*. ADDISON could not. GRAY could not. Many more might be named, who could not. MRS. SIGOURNEY'S friends will doubtless be ready to bear testimony that she can."

P R E F A C E .

SOME of the poems in this volume were written at an early age; others, amid domestic or maternal cares. The greater part were suggested by passing occasions, and partake of the nature of extemporaneous productions; all reveal by their brevity, the short periods of time allotted to their construction.

Like wild flowers among the dells, or clefts of the rock, they sprang up wherever the path of life chanced to lead. She who gathered, and now offers them to the beloved clime of her birth, selects for their motto the truthful words of an eloquent writer:—

“ Though I expect from them neither profit nor general fame, I consider myself amply repaid without either. Poetry has been to me, its own exceeding great reward. It possesses power to soothe affliction, to multiply and refine enjoyment, to endear solitude, and to give the habit of discovering the good and the beautiful, in all that meets or surrounds us.”

HARTFORD, Conn., Feb. 5th, 1845.

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SELECT POEMS.

THE BIRD.

BEAUTIFUL boy, with the sunny hair,
What wouldest thou do with that birdling rare?
It belongs to the sky,—it hath wings, you know,
Loosen your clasping, and let him go :—
But the child replied with a laugh of glee,
“It can learn to play,—it must stay with me !”

Then out spoke the sister with lute-like tone,
“In spring, when the ice from the brooks had gone,
The new-born leaves in the grove were stirred
By the sweetest music I every heard.
Brother mine,—’twas the song of the free,—
Will the song of thy captive as tuneful be ?”

Gentle Mother, whose yearning breast
Exults o’er the birds of thine own fair nest,
Methinks I see, through thy smile of care,
The quickened soul of a voiceless prayer.
Give it breath,—give it flight, to the Gracious Ear;—
A mother’s joy hath its root in fear.

Her fondest love hath a tinge of grief,—
Her proudest hopes are an aspen leaf;—